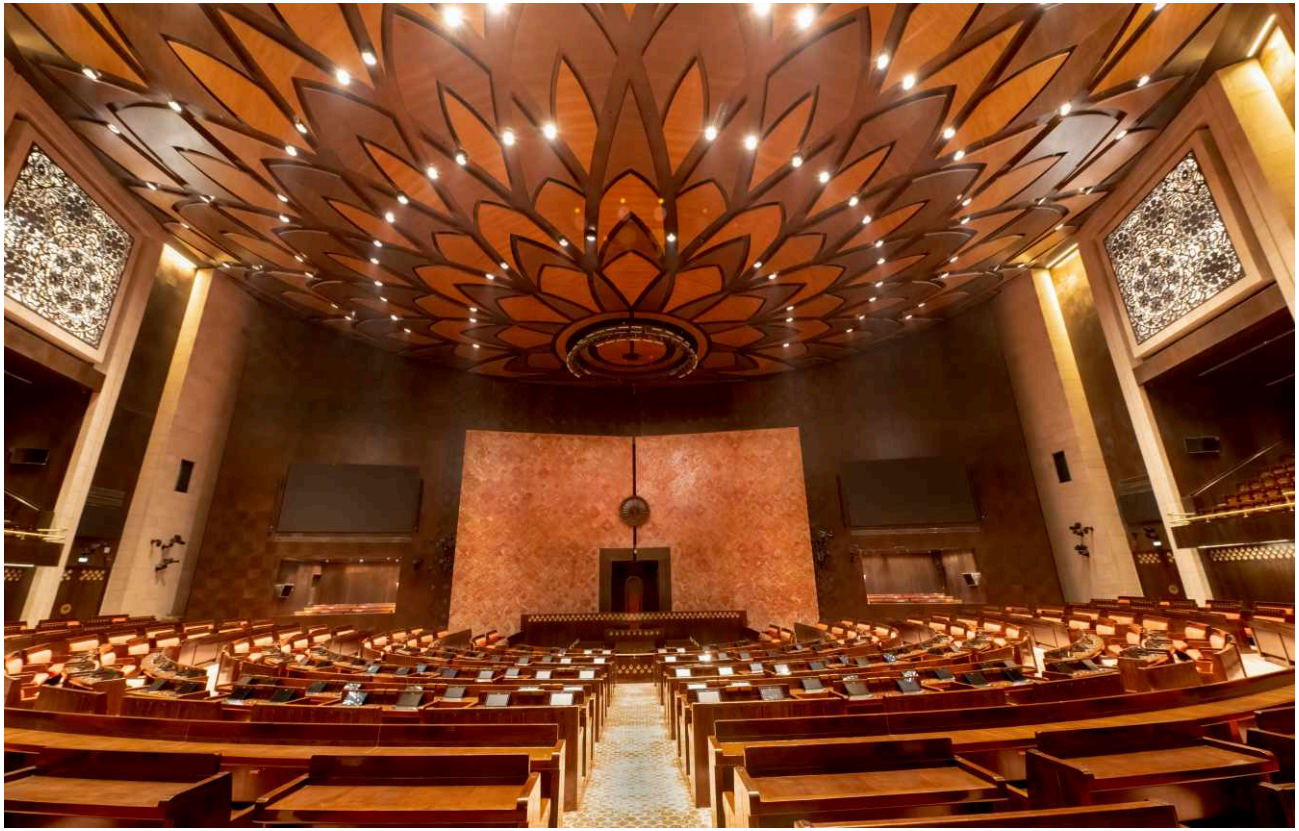
Serving the Nation through House

Two-term account of Harivansh in Parliament

एकं सत्विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति

About New Parliament House

- The foundation Stone was laid on Dec 10, 2020
- July 11, 2022, 6.5 metre-tall bronze National Emblem on the roof of the building was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- Prime Minister dedicated the new Parliament House to the nation on May 28, 2023. He also installed a Sengol with Nandi at the top facing East-West direction
- On September 19, 2023, Prime Minister led a procession with Members of Parliament from the Central Hall in the Old House to the new building
- The new building incorporates the specialities of different parts of the country. He mentioned granite from Rajasthan, timber from Maharashtra and carpet by Bhadhoi artisans.
- The first day of the new House saw the Parliament deliberate on the landmark Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Women's Reservation Bill 2023) that was eventually passed on September 21, 2023. The law reserves one-third of all seats for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies (including Delhi).



Area and Seating: 64,500 sqm with four floors. The Lok Sabha chamber has 888 seats, up from 543 in the old House. The Rajya Sabha can accommodate up to 384 members. This has been planned to accommodate future needs.

Need for a New Parliament building: The old Parliament House (Samvidhan Sadan) was built in 1927. Over the years, the building had shown signs of distress and over-utilisation with severe space constraints. The new building was planned to accommodate more staff, offices, incorporating modern technology to meet the needs of a 21st century legislative institution. The new building was also a key moment of the Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav (part of the celebrations during India’s 75th year of independence)

Gratitude

I had the privilege of serving two terms in Rajya Sabha - first from April 2014 to April 2020, and then from April 2020 to April 2026. Thus, my total tenure in the Rajya Sabha spanned twelve years, from April 2014 to April 2026. I represented the state of Bihar as a member of the Janata Dal (United).

During my first term in Rajya Sabha, I had the opportunity to serve as an MP only for about four years from 2014 to 2018. Thereafter, I was elected Deputy Chairman in 2018. During these four years as an MP, apart from my parliamentary responsibilities, I remained actively engaged in party work. I contributed to organizational expansion, training programmes for party workers, and other work relating to elections. Continuous efforts were made to strengthen the party's presence in Manipur and Jharkhand, along with extensive organizational work in Bihar. I was entrusted with responsibilities ranging from participation in the Working Committee of the party to party programmes. From articulating the party's policies and achievements on public platforms to enrolling new members, I sought to discharge these responsibilities with utmost dedication.

As a Member of Parliament, I remained equally engaged to my responsibilities with sincerity. If at any time I was absent from the House, it was only due to party responsibilities or election - related work. Otherwise, I consistently made efforts to always remain present during all sittings of the House from beginning till end. I also made it a point to attend all parliamentary committee meetings.

Re-elected to Rajya Sabha in April 2020, I was again elected as Deputy Chairman in September 2020. Thus, between April 2020 and September 2020, I served solely as a Member of Parliament. During the challenging period of the COVID - 19 pandemic, I remained continuously engaged with district - level organizational in - charges and active party members through technological platforms, coordinating with senior party leadership and participating in party programmes.

In this manner, twelve years - from 9 April 2014 to 9 April 2026 - were devoted to conducting the Rajya Sabha and performing other parliamentary as well as political duties.

A public report covering the first five years of my initial term (2014–2019), titled 'पांच सालों का संसद सफर' was released when the nation was commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in October 2019 (QR code for reading the copy of the issue is printed on the back cover page). This present document is the second public report, encompassing the entire twelve - year tenure. Several details were already documented in the earlier report—such as the students admitted to Kendriya Vidyalayas under my quota, my interventions in Parliament, my participation in Committees, the initial utilization of the MPLADS funds, participation in public programmes, early experiences in politics, and my gratitude to respected senior leaders whose support enabled me to undertake this public responsibility.

An attempt has been made to consciously avoid unnecessary repetition of those details in this edition. Together, the two reports present a complete picture of my twelve years of public life. In this report, an effort has been made to present an account of these twelve years primarily through data and documented facts.

Why this Effort?

The Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has made an important observation regarding Parliament - that it should be evaluated on the basis of how it functions and what meaningful contributions it makes, rather than on the basis of disruptions or disturbances. That cannot be the benchmark. The true measure of Parliament's performance lies in the number of hours it has worked and the positive outcomes it has generated.

Guided by this benchmark, this report seeks to record my responsibilities and work as a Member of Parliament and as Deputy Chairman. The inspiration behind this endeavour also stems from the words of former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (1998), who emphasized that unless India establishes its rightful place in the world, it will not command respect. In this world, fear has no place; strength alone respects strength. We must become strong, not merely in military terms, but economically as well. Both must advance together.

Throughout my tenure in Parliament, Dr. Kalam's words remained a constant source of inspiration. Even after assuming the office of Deputy Chairman, I remained mindful that history, or the future, would evaluate our collective work in Parliament against such principles.

With this spirit, and in the interest of transparency in public life, I place this report before you so that my work remains open to public assessment.

This parliamentary journey was made possible with blessings of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar, Shri Nitish Kumar, who sent me twice to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar. I express my sincere gratitude to him. I was also given the opportunity, in 2018 and again in 2020, to contest for the constitutional office of Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. For this, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and to Shri Amit Shah. I am grateful to all the constituent parties of the NDA for entrusting me with this responsibility on two occasions.

In conducting the proceedings of the House, I received cooperation from all sides and from every Hon'ble Member. I extend my thanks to each one of them. I as Deputy Chairman had the privilege of working with and learning from three Hon'ble Chairmen of the Rajya Sabha and Vice Presidents of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, and Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan. I convey my gratitude to each one of them. I also thank all those Hon'ble Members who extended their support as members of the Panel of Vice - Chairmen during my tenure as Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

Finally, I express my personal gratitude to every individual in my office whose cooperation enabled me to discharge my responsibilities effectively throughout this tenure and also their hardwork in archiving the work over the last 12 years that ensured publication of this report card.

- Harivansh

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Road to Rajya Sabha

English translation of an article authored by Harivansh in Prabhat Khabar dated February 2, 2014 after being nominated by the party to the Rajya Sabha

There was no prior indication, no hint or expectation that I would be sent to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar by the JD(U). Until then, my engagement with politics had been from the outside, through journalism — observing, listening and reading, always in the role of a spectator.

During my years in journalism, I saw, heard and reported how difficult it was to get elected to the Rajya Sabha in today's politics. Recently, one very senior leader from Haryana stated that it now costs around one hundred crore rupees to secure a Rajya Sabha seat. In Jharkhand, CBI investigations were underway against 26 MLAs in connection with the Rajya Sabha elections of 2010 and 2012. Legislators from almost all major parties, barring a few like the CPI(ML), are under scrutiny. The CBI has filed charge sheets against one MLA and two candidates. During the 2012 Rajya Sabha election alone, the Income Tax Department seized cash amounting to ₹2.15 crore. Earlier, Vijay Mallya, whose Kingfisher Airlines had collapsed, entered the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka as an Independent with BJP support.

There have been many such instances, where independent candidates or nominees backed by corporate interests have entered the Rajya Sabha with the power of money. There have been several cases when independent candidates secured more votes than the party's official candidates. On the other hand, uncontested, consensus-based elections also have happened. Recent election in Bihar is an example in this context. Ideally, Rajya Sabha seats should be allocated in proportion to party strength in the Assembly. Why then this needless bargaining and competition? Such a process is possible only in a mature and honest political environment.

All this belonged to my earlier experience in journalism.

Once the information came through, I travelled to Patna a day before filing my nomination papers. As a student entering the primary school of politics, I had not realized the volume of details required to be completed while filing the papers for election. Those in politics for a

Accepting my certificate from the Election Returning Officer in Patna along with my party colleague Kahkashan Parveen (right) who was also elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2014

long time know this well and therefore find it easier. At every step, however, experienced party colleagues were there to guide me too. It offered a glimpse into how political organisations are quietly sustained by committed workers who operate behind the scenes, without seeking recognition. Such people exist in other parties too. They are all disciplined, punctual and deeply dedicated. I thanked all of them, for showing this level of sincerity, competence and self-discipline.

The forms were submitted. A security-deposit of ten thousand rupees was paid, which was returned after the uncontested election. In this way, I received a certificate of entry to the Rajya Sabha without spending a single rupee. As a journalist, this experience left a lasting impression on me.

It is true that in many affluent and large states, reports of money-driven Rajya Sabha elections have surfaced from time to time. Yet Bihar, despite lagging behind those states in wealth or development, stands ahead in political values, conduct and culture. This integrity in politics is worthy of emulation.

I tried to carry this integrity forward in public life. That is why, even while filing my nomination, only two or three friends accompanied me — no supporters, no garlands. When the certificate of election was issued, I was almost alone. I quietly collected it, moving with couple of friends along the edges of the crowd gathered around other successful candidates, avoiding ceremonial greetings.

Beyond the personal details required in the Rajya Sabha nomination, I voluntarily shared additional information in the public domain. Several professionals advised that this was unnecessary. But I felt that stepping into public life carries a moral obligation to make even personal details public. Friends in Ranchi called to ask when and how I was returning. I came without informing anyone.

Even as a journalist, I never sought any special treatment by announcing my profession. I never placed a press sticker on my vehicle. I practised journalism as part of the crowd. I participated in several public campaigns, across schools and colleges, in different regions and on diverse issues. My wish is to continue in this new role as well — remaining an ordinary citizen.

Buddha turning the wheel of law (Dharma-Chakra Pravartnaya). One of the paintings in the outer lobby of Samvidhan Sadan

Parliamentary Career: Key moments

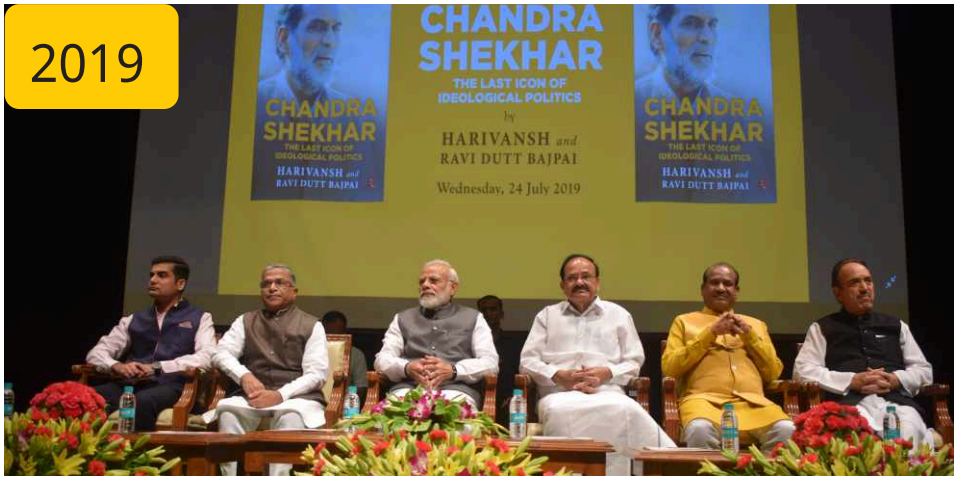
2014

Taking Oath in the Rajya Sabha from JD(U) (Photo courtesy : RSTV, Sansad TV)

2018

Nominated as the NDA candidate to the election of Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha to succeed incumbent Prof. PJ Kurien. On August 8, 2018, Harivansh became the first non-Congress member to occupy the post.

2019



Harivansh served additional media advisor to former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar in 1990. On July 24, 2019, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Speaker Om Birla, Ghulam Nabi Azad unveiled the biography co-authored by Harivansh in the Parliament complex.

2020

Re-elected to Rajya Sabha from JD(U)

Parliamentary Career: Key moments

2020

On September 14, 2020 Harivansh was re-elected to the post of Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman.

2023

Participated in the inauguation of the New Parliament Building in May 2023

Member of Parliament 2014-2018

During the four years as a Member of Parliament representing JD(U), Harivansh was proactive in participating in various debates in the house and equally focused on fulfilling his role in the Parliamentary Committees. His career as a journalist and editor reflected in the meticulous preparation for legislative debates and even for shorter interventions such as Zero Hour and Special Mention.

He has raised key issues on judicial accountability, financial mismanagement in the name of shell companies, improving learning outcomes in schools through Questions, Zero Hour, and Special Mentions.

In his Special Mention on July 27, 2016, Harivansh brought the attention of the House to the concerning story in the Open Magazine about corruption in judiciary. This was based on a report published that alleged certain middlemen with access to advance information about judicial verdicts for corporates and other beneficiaries and were operating with impunity over several years.

In another instance, Harivansh raised the issue of Shell companies on March 22, 2017. In his intervention he had highlighted reports by CAG and also brought the attention of the Government that at least ₹3,900 crore was laundered in just two months, that Kolkata alone hosts over 3,000 active shell companies. 11 Members had associated themselves indicating the gravity of the intervention. During this period the Government had already initiated steps to act against shell companies and as part of the Parliamentary process an update was provided. It underlined the actions to identify and strike off such companies registered under the Companies Act.

His maiden speech on the Union Budget in 2014 coincided with the first budget of a newly elected government. As he was in the opposition side at the time, Harivansh covered a range of topics and underlined his belief in constructive criticism. Overall, he participated in 19 legislative debates, including on the landmark legislations such as The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018, The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2016, The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2016. As a Member of Parliament, Harivansh actively participated in all the Committees, prominent being the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence. He participated in several key deliberations on modernizing India's defence forces needs and enhancing defence budget. He also contributed actively in finalizing the key recommendation of the Select Committee on the Motor Vehicles Act amendment in 2017. This Bill was passed in 2019.

From a tour of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence

During the Select Committee meeting on Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2017

Summary of work as Member of Parliament (2014-2018)

Attendance: As an MP, Harivansh participated in 266 sittings from Session 231 (June 2014) till Session 246 (August 2018) out of the total 297 sittings held during this period. He was elected as Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on August 8, 2018. He had an attendance percentage of over 90% during his time as an MP. Even the few days he was absent a significant number of them was during the Winter Session in 2015 owing to party commitments for the State Assembly Elections.

Questions: Across the sessions during the four years, Harivansh asked 309 questions out of which 279 where Unstarred i.e. only replies are provided to the Member and 30 were Starred Questions where a Member has an opportunity to seek reply from the concerned Minister on the Floor of the House.

Debates

Debate Type	Debates Participated
Short Duration Discussion	4
Matters raised with Permission (Zero Hour)	56
Special Mention	6
Budget	5
Government Legislation	22
Private Member Legislation	2
Other Discussions	5

Detailed Attendance

Session No.	Session Name	Sittings	Attended
231	First Session after Constitution of 16th Lok Sabha	3	3
232	Monsoon Session, 2014	27	26
233	Winter Session, 2014	22	15
234	Budget Session-I, 2015	19	19
235	Budget Session-II, 2015	13	13
236	Monsoon Session, 2015	17	5*
237	Winter Session, 2015	20	19
238	Budget Session-I, 2016	16	15

Session No.	Session Name	Sittings	Attended
239	Budget Session-II, 2016	15	11
240	Monsoon Session, 2016	20	20
241	Winter Session, 2016	21	21
242	Budget Session, 2017	29	27
243	Monsoon Session, 2017	18	15
244	Winter Session, 2017	13	13
245	Budget Session, 2018	30	30
246	Monsoon Session, 2018	17	14*

*Could not attend Parliamentary session due to party work for State elections
** Elected as Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha on August 9, 2018. The Deputy Chairman is not required to sign the attendance.

Committees as Member of Parliament 2014-2018

Attendance: During these four years, Harivansh was present in all the 109 Committee meetings across different committees.

No.	Committee	Term	Meetings held	Attendance
1.	House Committee	Sept. 2014 to June, 2018	17	17
2.	Defence Committee - DRPC	Sept. 2014 to Aug. 2018	59	59
3.	Select Committee on the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013	July - Aug. 2016	4	4
4.	Joint Committee on Bill to amend Citizenship Act, 1955	Aug. 2016 to Sept. 2018	9	9
5.	Select Committee on Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017	Aug. - Sept., 2017	10	10
6.	Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	Sept. 2014 to Aug. 2018	8	8
7.	National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction	June, 2017	0	0
8.	Samsad (Court of Vishva Bharati) Santiniketan*	May - Aug., 2018	-	-
9	Agriculture Committee – DRPC**	July 2020 – Sept. 2020	0	0

*Meeting not held during the brief period as member
** Part of the Committee for brief period before being re-elected as Dy. Chairman

In addition to the Parliamentary Committees, he was part of the following Committees.

No	Committee	Member	Elected
1.	Hindi Vidyapeeth, Deoghar (JHARKHAND)	Member (Managing Council)	31.03.2018
2.	Telecom Advisory Committee, Patna	Member	07.03.2016
3.	District Consumer Protection Council, Patna	Member	03.09.2016

After re-election as Member of Parliament in 2020. (From Left) Ramnath Thakur who was also elected as MP in 2020, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, then Dy. CM Sushil Kumar Modi, JD(U) State President and MP Bashistha Narain Singh, Nand Kishore Yadav

In Janata Dal (United)

From the very day he took primary membership of the party, he remained actively engaged as a grassroots worker. Party leaders assigned responsibilities and defined his role, which he sought to discharge with full commitment. This active involvement within the party continued until his election as Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on 9 August 2018.

As Manipur In-charge

The party entrusted Harivansh with responsibility for Manipur. He undertook visits several times to the state, met local leaders, and engaged with party workers. He held discussions to strengthen the organisation, energise its activities, and outline programmes aimed at expanding the party's presence in the state.

कुड़मी को संवैधानिक अधिकार मिले : हरिवंश

करम महोत्सव

जमशेदपुर | वरीय संवाददाता

राज्यसभा के उप सभापति हरिवंश ने कहा कि झारखंडी जीवन शैली और करम महोत्सव दुनिया को मानव सभ्यता बचाने का रास्ता दिखाता है। यह राज्य दुनिया में विशिष्ट पहचान रखती है। यहां के आदिवासी और कुड़मी की पहचान एक जैसी है। इनके संवैधानिक अधिकार का रास्ता प्रशस्त होना चाहिए। वे शनिवार को गोपाल मैदान में कुड़मी सेना के करम महोत्सव को बतौर मुख्य अतिथि संबोधित कर रहे थे।

उन्होंने कहा कि दुनिया को करम पर्व के महत्व को समझना होगा। दुनिया को जीना और बचना है तो प्रकृति को बचाना होगा। यहां के पूर्वज सूरजपी थे। प्रकृति को बचाने के लिए जंगल काटने नहीं दिया।

पर्यावरण को धर्म से जोड़ा: बिहार के मंत्री श्रीलेश कुमार ने कहा कि करम पूजा भूमि संरक्षण और पर्यावरण संतुलन का आधार है। पूर्वजों ने इसके लिए पर्यावरण को धर्म से जोड़ दिया। मंत्री ने कहा कि 1950 से पहले आदिवासी में शामिल कुड़मी को जनसंख्या के आधार पर आरक्षण नहीं मिल रहा है। सरकार विकास चाहती है तो कुड़मी को आदिवासी का दर्जा देकर मुख्यधारा से जोड़ें। बिहार में चंपारण सत्याग्रह आंदोलन का शताब्दी वर्ष मना रहे हैं। महात्मा गांधी को पूजते हैं, उसके हत्यारे गांधी को नहीं। अपमी को आज के लोग भी मारने को तैयार नहीं हैं।

पूर्व मंत्री जलेश्वर महतो ने कहा कि अपनी संस्कृति और पहचान बचाने में प्रयासरत कुड़मी सेना के संघ के साथ चलने के लिए प्रेरित किया। विनोदबिहारी महतो कहते थे 'पढ़ो और लड़ो'। लड़ो का मतलब अधिकार पाने के लिए संघर्ष करो।

गूंज झूमर संगीत व करम गीत : गोपिया रम्हरिया की राजेश झूमर एंड बाउल मेलोडी ने रंगारंग सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम से समां बांध दिया। झूमर संगीत और करम गीत पर लोगों को थिरकने पर मजबूर किया। गायक राजेश महतो ने 'पोहिले वंदना कोरी गायेंका गोरु मोहरी', 'झारखंड केसन सुंदर', सुषमा बारी ने 'भादर मासेक एकादशी करमाती रहत उपवासी', उर्मिला ने 'कोरम राजक पूजा

गोपाल मैदान में शनिवार को कुड़मी सेना के करम महोत्सव में पारंपरिक नृत्य करती युवतियां। • हिन्दुस्तान

करम महोत्सव में मादर पर थाप देते राज्यसभा के उप सभापति हरिवंश।

गोपाल मैदान में शनिवार को करम महोत्सव में सम्मानित समाज के लोगों के साथ मुख्य अतिथि राज्यसभा के उप सभापति हरिवंश व बिहार के मंत्री श्रीलेश कुमार। • हिन्दुस्तान

नीतीश की निर्णायक भूमिका

हरिवंश ने कहा कि बहुत कम लोग जानते हैं कि अलग झारखंड राज्य बनाने में नीतीश कुमार की निर्णायक भूमिका रही है। केंद्रीय मंत्री रहते वहां की प्रगति और विकास के लिए काम किया। कुड़मी सेना ने समाज के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में अद्वितीय कार्य करने वालों को सम्मानित कर समाज को लाजवाब प्रदान किया है। हरिवंश समेत बिहार के सामीण कार्य मंत्री श्रीलेश कुमार एवं झारखंड के पूर्व मंत्री जलेश्वर महतो, कुड़मी सेना के अध्यक्ष शैलेंद्र महतो करम डाल की पूजा में शामिल हुए।

सरकार एसटी का दर्जा दे

शैलेंद्र-कुड़मी सेना के अध्यक्ष शैलेंद्र महतो ने झारखंड सरकार से आग्रहण किया कि कुड़मी को अनुसूचित जनजाति सूचीबद्ध करें। कुड़मी को किसी से प्रभाव पद की आवश्यकता नहीं है। सरकार अधिकार देने के लिए है। कुड़मी जाति की पहचान की लड़ाई लड़ रहा हूं। सेना की ओर से अतिथियों को लोटा पानी, चादर, गुलदस्ता और पौधा

इन हस्तियों का हुआ सम्मान

प्रदेश की युवा हस्ती सुजाता कुमारी (आईएएस), ज्योति कुमारी (आईएएस), खातिल की साहेबा मनिता देवी कुड़मी महिला रत्न से सम्मानित किया गया। झारखंड पुलिस पदाधिकारियों के लिए सर्विस संयोग कुमार महतो समेत पार्श्वकलाकार मंजरा महतो, डॉ. सुनीता सोरेन, ब्यूटीशियन रश्मिनी मुर्मू, शिक्षक हरधन महतो को मानव सेवा के लिए कुड़मी रत्न सम्मान दिया गया। निकिता महतो को मेडिकल और अभिजीत महतो को इंजीनियरिंग

Worker Training Camps

From the time he became a Member of Parliament until his election as Deputy Chairman, Harivansh played an active role in party worker training camps. During his tenure as MP, the party organised several state-level training programmes in Patna, Rajgir attended by grassroots workers from across Bihar. Harivansh maintained full participation throughout the camp and interacted with workers every day.

The primary objective was to familiarise active workers with the party's ideas and policies, and to explain what sets the party apart. The sessions also highlighted how Nitish Kumar, after becoming Chief Minister, established a distinct national identity through good governance, social justice and development, and how his vision and policies helped steer Bihar away from resignation to fate, placing the state back on track and, in many respects, emerging as a model for the country.

As National General Secretary and Spokesperson

The party entrusted Harivansh with the responsibilities of National General Secretary and National Spokesperson, roles he carried out with commitment. As National Spokesperson, he articulated Bihar's development journey, Nitish Kumar's policies, and the JD(U)'s positions on regional and national issues across national media platforms. At the same time, he established regular coordination with state and district spokespersons, guiding them on issue-based communication, policy-aligned statements, and the consistent release of press briefings, while also providing training and direction.

National Executive Meetings

During Harivansh's tenure as Member of Parliament, three meetings of the party's National Executive were held. The first took place in Rajgir on 16–17 October 2016, where resolutions on social, political and economic issues were presented and adopted. The second meeting was held in Patna on 19 August 2017, followed by the third in New Delhi on 8 July 2018.

He participated in all three meetings not only as a party functionary but also carried out the responsibilities assigned to him. During this period, he contributed in drafting the party's manifesto, which was placed before the Executive for consideration.

Participation in the Human Chain Campaign

Shri Nitish Kumar launched two flagship social reform initiatives — prohibition and campaigns against dowry and child marriage. To mobilise public participation for these transformative programmes, he initiated statewide human chains across Bihar.

As a party worker and office bearer, Harivansh played his part in supporting this campaign. He contributed to its outreach in Chhapra, Siwan and Gopalganj, helping raise awareness and encourage wider public involvement. He also participated in both human chains while staying at Jayaprakash Narayan's village, Sitab Diara.

Engagement in Jharkhand

Undivided Bihar was Harivansh's field of work for nearly three decades during his years in journalism. Though elected to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar, the party drew upon his long

experience in Jharkhand, and he fulfilled his responsibilities accordingly. He remained consistently engaged in strengthening and expanding the party's presence in the state.

As part of this effort, a state-level workers' convention was held at Dhurwa Maidan in Ranchi on 25 February 2018, where he played an active role. Earlier, on 26 October 2016, he participated in a party programme in Dumka alongside Nitish Kumar. On 11 June 2017, a party event in Jamshedpur addressed the subject of prohibition. Large public programmes on prohibition were also organised in Palamu and Dhanbad, which he attended with Nitish Kumar. In Ranchi, he took part in a special party programme on the TheChotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNT), 1908, and the Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act (SPT), 1949, meant to protect indigenous land rights alongside the party leadership.

Engagement During Covid Period

During the Covid period in 2020, Harivansh was not the Deputy Chairman for a few months. During this time, he resumed active organisational work for the party in both Bihar and Jharkhand. In Bihar, he participated in party programmes through online platforms, engaged with several leaders and committed workers, and worked to bring them into the party fold. He also played a role in drawing senior leaders, including Salkhan Murmu, closer to the party.

Between 18 July and 2 August 2020, Assembly-wise virtual conferences were organised across Bihar during the Covid period. Harivansh participated daily in these online meetings along with party leaders and interacted directly with workers. All Assembly constituencies were grouped district-wise, and each day he joined the conferences with different teams that included JD(U) leaders Ashok Choudhary, Sanjay Jha, Shailesh Kumar, Ramsevak Singh, Md Yunus Hussain Hakim, Santosh Nirala, Neeraj Kumar, Abhay Kushwaha, Ramesh Rishidev, Lakshmeshwar Rai, Tanveer Akhtar, Suheli Mehta, Maheshwar Hazari, Madan Sahni, Kahkasha Parveen and Umesh Kushwaha.

Together, they engaged with workers and leaders from every district and Assembly segment, discussing programmes such as Saat Nischay, the Bihar Student Credit Card Scheme, Jal Jeevan Hariyali, the state of education, development of educational institutions, Tharuhat development, initiatives for promoting Mithila painting, power supply, road and bridge construction, and development of tourism sites, while communicating the state government's initiatives and achievements.

Special Events

On the birth anniversary of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan, a special programme was held at his native village Sitab Diara on 11 October 2014. Nitish Kumar, along with several senior party leaders, travelled to Sitab Diara to attend the event. He reached the village by road, at a time when he had stepped down as Chief Minister of Bihar. The public reception he received along the route was historic.

As a party worker, and also because the programme was held in his own village, Harivansh participated actively in the event.

Under Nitish Kumar's leadership, Harivansh worked in various roles to strengthen the party's presence both at the state and the national level

Outcome of MPLADS Fund Allocations:
Building Institutions of Education, Training and Research

1

Centre for River Studies

4.27 cr

Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna

2

Centre for Earthquake Engineering Research

7.1 cr

IIT Patna

3

Centre for Endangered Language Studies

IIT Patna

9.87 cr

4

Business Incubation Centre
Centre for Poilicy Research

9.43 cr

CIMP Patna

5

Centre for Atificial Intelligence

Magadh University Gaya

20 cr

(2014 - 2026) 54.57 cr were available. 51.19 cr were spent as on Dec, 31 2025

Adhering to the letter and spirit of MPLADS

Part 1: The principles and inspiration behind allocating MPLADS fund

Started in 1993, the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) allows every MP to recommend works that create durable community assets at local levels. Although, developmental works with funds under specific policy falls under the domain of the Executive, the MPLADS created a small but important decentralised means to allocate funds for local development. In return, MPs had an opportunity to respond to their constituency needs and helped strengthen people's trust in a democratic set-up. While this intent was clear since its early years, there were several deviations observed in the way members utilised it. As an editor of a Newspaper in the 1990s, we observed various discrepancies between the intent of the MPLADS and the way it was being used. In independent capacity, the newspaper audited the outcomes of schemes and found various inconsistencies. It has been argued by some in the political community and observers that way in which MPLADS are utilised has impacted the credibility of elected representatives. Although many members have utilised them effectively, but the actions of a few have created a negative perception for the political community.

The total outlay for the scheme for over 790 MPs is a fraction of the overall Union Budget. However, when utilised well, it allows each member to make unique interventions that nudge the state in the right direction. In doing so, it becomes a meaningful channel for members to demonstrate their vision for the state and their constituency. Having transitioned from a career in media to being a Rajya Sabha Member from Bihar since 2014, it was important to utilise the MPLADS for the state's overall development. Unlike the restriction on a Lok Sabha MP to utilise the funds within the constituency, a Rajya Sabha member can spend the fund across the state. In the objective to utilise it for Bihar's development, the projects sanctioned needed to get a high return on investment i.e., its presence must further catalyse the socio-economic changes in multiples of the amount spent. This ambition was also driven by a deep-rooted observation of having grown up in Bihar through the late 60s and the decades thereafter. While the country transitioned from an agrarian to a service-heavy economy, Bihar's governance lagged, and it was left behind by a long margin.

Term	Work allocated	Funds Available	Funds Spent
2014-2020	4	30 crores	21.76 crore
2020-2026	2	22 crores*	29.43 crores
Total	6	54.57 crores**	51.19 crores

Summary of MPLADS expenses

Available funds as on December 31, 2025: 3.38 crores

* Due to Covid-19, MPLADS was briefly kept in abeyance due to which the available funds were lesser.

** While the entitlement as MP across two terms is 52 crores, the additional amount available is a result of interest accrued on the funds and any pending funds carried forward from the term of the predecessor (prior to 2014).

chunk of blame falls on misgovernance in the past including the phase of 1990-2005 often referred as 'Jungle Raj'.

This was the decade where the southern states were moving in a progressive direction embracing technology while Bihar was mired in identity politics. This naturally resulted in flight of capital since the early days of a young Bihari. In the late 1990s, Andhra Pradesh managed to increase its engineering colleges from 32 to 107 in just five years. Karnataka had 132 engineering colleges at the time that were responsible for the bulk of the engineers emerging from the southern states. As the supply of talent remained steady, the IT sector had little doubt where to invest. In the pre-liberalisation era one would hardly have looked at India as a reliable country with barely any computers available. But it was the power of transformative governance and allowing the private sector to flourish that has led to the development of a robust IT sector. During this time Bihar, tagged under the BIMARU states, was focused on opening 'Charwaha Vidyalayas' (Shepherd's school) in the 90s. The migration patterns that we see today, are a consequence of unequal growth rates in states. For decades now, migration to another state for a Bihari was seen as a matter of pride as that would be seen as a sign of prosperity achieved somewhere else. Even to date we are seeing the consequences where southern and western states are attracting investments in Artificial Intelligence, data centres and Global Capability Centres.

In recent months, Google has announced $15 billion in Visakhpatnam to develop an AI hub, one of the landmark investment in India's digital infrastructure. Similarly, Amazon has announced $35 billion worth of investment, a bulk of which will flow to the southern and western states. This is largely because the talent pool and the necessary infrastructure were built earlier. Such opportunities come in phases and in the post-liberalisation era Bihar fell far behind in this quest. In this phase the wealth of Biharis were also redirected to Southern States as students in the hope of a better future migrated to study in these states. This flight of capital and talent wasn't looked at seriously in the past.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was focused on correcting this lopsided growth by first addressing the access to basic as well as higher education since his first term (2005-10). His work on school education and the impact of the cycle for girls is well-known. He also prioritised development of educational institutes in the state to reduce outward migration merely for higher education. The revival of Nalanda

University, rise in engineering, management, and medical institutes were some of the notable steps in this direction. This was one of the key motivating factors in dedicating my MPLADS fund towards strengthening the state's knowledge systems and institutions. Additionally, the experience of visiting leading universities in the US as part of a study visit for journalists in early 90s showed the value of knowledge and research in solving a country's policies. It was an early lesson that finding policy solutions are not an overnight phenomenon, but a carefully crafted supply of quality evidence from knowledge hubs to the governance systems. It is with this objective that specific centres in leading educational institutes received the funds for solving Bihar's challenges.

Across the author's two terms in Rajya Sabha since 2014, over Rs. 50 crores out of the available 54.5 crores from the MPLADS fund have been allocated for developing knowledge hubs in the state. Nearly Rs. 12 crores of fund allocated between 2016-2018 led to the creation of the Centre for Earthquake Engineering Research (CEER) at IIT Patna and the Centre for River Studies at Aryabhatta University.

Eight districts of Bihar fall under Category V (Very High Risk) seismic zone and 27 of the 38 districts fall under Category IV (High Risk). Although, earthquakes by themselves do not kill as many people as poorly built structures do, which makes better construction practices essential. The faculty at the institute have launched courses in structural engineering and developed a state-of-the-art laboratory. It has helped in improving the design of new buildings and creating a checklist to evaluate the quality of existing constructions.

Bihar's dense river network such as Kosi, Ganga, Sone, Gandak, Bagmati, and Ghaghara has led to frequent floods. The Centre for River Studies works on research and developing practical solutions to address the state's geographical challenges as it spends about Rs. 10,000 crores annually in flood management and relief measures. The respective Centres are already collaborating with other leading institutes and working with the Bihar Disaster Management Authority in improving their response mechanisms.

Welcome to Inaugural Ceremony
CENTRE FOR EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH LAB
&
CENTRE FOR EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH

At the inauguration of the two Centres, one on Earthquake engineering and the other on endangered languages at IIT Patna in September 2025

MPLADS contribute to building the infrastructure for the institute, but its value is further unlocked by enabling them to attract additional grants and partnerships through projects. With some support from the state government, these institutes remain operationally self-sufficient in the long run. It is the young minds of Bihar who are actively involved in solving the state's problems. The socio-economic return for the state is of much higher magnitude than the actual monetary allocation for the project.

Alongside these, a Centre for Endangered Language Studies is already operational at IIT Patna. The inspiration for this centre comes from the journey of Rahul Sankrityayan, a Sahitya Akademi awardee in1958. Beyond his rich literary career, he has played a critical role in bringing back ancient scriptures and artefacts from Tibet that once belonged to the erstwhile Nalanda libraries. Many of these remain unexplored and hold a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from our past.

Three more institutes are in the pipeline in Gaya and Patna with a cumulative allocation of nearly Rs 30 crores. These include an Artificial Intelligence Centre at Magadh University in Gaya, a Centre for Public Policy, and a Business Incubation and Innovation Foundation at the Chandragupt Institute of Management Patna.

In communications to the District Magistrates, details of the project were shared with clear instructions to use the best available implementing agencies leaving the efficient execution job to the administration. For every member, it is not the process, but the intent and outcomes behind the allocation that must be clear. As Chairman of the MPLADS Committee in the Rajya Sabha, we have focused on addressing various administrative concerns of the members and the Ministry too has streamlined the process with an integrated digital platform.

Whether through the Union Budget, state budgets, or the MPLADS, the public finances spent must be directed towards the development of the country. In the journey towards Prime Minister's Vikasit Bharat vision, every elected representative can play a key role in strengthen-ing the institutional and development capacity of their respective state and constituency for a better future.

Dream to build Bihar's institutional strength

Part 2 : Utilising funds for disaster resilience through an earthquake research centre and a river studies centre

On January 15, 1934, a powerful earthquake measuring 8.3 magnitude on the Richter Scale struck Bihar and Nepal leaving casualties at a scale rarely seen in human history. While the official statistics claimed just over 7,000 deaths, there are records estimating it to be upwards of 20,000. For all practical purposes, three districts of Bihar were completely razed. Likewise in Nepal, cities such as Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and some others faced a similar fate. Nearly a century ago, our understanding of natural disasters and why they happen wasn't well known. But over the decades, the risk for those in the proximity of the Himalayas is clearer.

The author had first-hand account of seeing the damages caused by the 1988 earthquake, with epicenter in Nepal. History is filled with examples where major incidents like earthquake, natural disasters shape the memories of an entire generation. These experiences also allow us to learn but also delve deeper into why and how these occur. Today we know a lot more about these risks.

Eight districts of Bihar fall under Category V (Very High Risk) seismic zone as per the Bureau of Indian Standards. 27 out of the 38 districts of the state fall under Category 4 (High Risk). The risk of an earthquake is not a matter of chance but one could argue a certainty. In 2015, the state saw an earthquake of about 7.8 magnitude. One data indicates that over the last two centuries, the state has seen over 25 earthquakes of intensity of 5.4 and above. As such, the state must invest heavily in improving its disaster preparedness. This not only includes preparing for a natural calamity but also invest in a range of mitigation measures that reduce the damage to lives and property. Bihar's challenges are not only due to its proximity to Nepal that is prone to earthquakes, but also the nature of soil that can pose a hazard to the structure.

It is these facts that channelised by decision to invest the MPLADS fund in building a Centre for Earthquake Engineering Research (CEER) at the IIT Patna campus. The focus of the institute is clear, build better engineers, invest in capacity building, partner with top institutes in India and world to ensure the best knowledge is used in improving the standard of construction. For example, the institute works in improving the design of new buildings as well as creating a checklist that helps to evaluate the quality of existing constructions.

When we look at other countries, the devastating impact of earthquake in Turkey was attributed to bad building designs. As one would summarise it, earthquake

At the inauguration of the two Centres, one on Earthquake engineering and the other on endangered languages at IIT Patna in September 2025

don't kill as many people as bad constructions do. As a country that produces so many engineers, and the knowledge that our institutions possess, India has a much better scope in solving many of these challenges. The CEER institute at IIT Patna, built at the cost Rs. 7.1 crores, will focus on addressing these. The state-of-the-art laboratory at CEER features Bihar's first reconfigurable reaction wall and floor. It enables simulations and conduct tests to assess safety of multistorey frames and tall structures. The lab's design itself was prepared by the excellent faculty of the institute.

As part of its research, this centre is also mapping the seismic zones into further micro-zones to better tailor the response mechanisms. Higher the number of skilled professionals within the state, the better the state capacity in executing a multi-pronged approach to solving the hazards posed by earthquakes. And these will be achieved by partnerships and working with public institutions such as Bihar State Disaster Management Authority, national bodies and other universities.

A second issue that impacts Bihar extensively is the periodic floods driven by fooding. Just like the history of earthquake in Bihar, there are records of large-scale damages caused by the Kosi floods such as 1954, 1984, 1991, 2008 among others. It is infamously referred as the Sorrow of Bihar. In addition to Kosi, there are a network of rivers in the states such as Ganga, Sone, Gandak, Bagmati, and Ghagra. The frequent changes in the course of the rivers destroy crops, damages infrastructure connecting villages, and displaces millions. These developments are a consequence of geographical features of the state, particularly for northern Bihar. It is estimated that about over three-fourth of the state population lives in the risk of flooding.

Bihar's rivers such as Kosi, Ganga, and others are filled with sediments that lead to more flooding. This also creates challenges of changing river course. Further, the lack of capacity to hold water in the higher regions where these rivers originate eventually end up releasing water resulting in frequent floods. Unseasonal rains and larger shifts due to climate change has only further exacerbated this problem.

The ISRO too has published the Flood Atlas of Bihar measuring key causes of flooding in these regions. Bihar spends about Rs. 1000 crores every year only on flood management and relief. It is to address these issues that a fund was allocated in October 2016 of about Rs. 4.27 crores to build the River Research Centre. The institute received an approval from All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recently to provide technical courses on the subject. The first batch of students have already started undertaking courses since 2023. The institute has already seen high interest from students studying structural engineering. The institute offers three courses, first is a Master of Science in River Management, a Certificate programme in River Management and a Doctor of Philosophy in River Science

Just like the institute on earthquake engineering, this institute set up under the Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna will work with the Bihar government and other industries to understand and implement solutions to Bihar's flood issues. With expert faculties from top universities and an MoU with the National Institute of Hydrology, Rorkee, the students will emerge as sought-after professionals not just in Bihar but the rest of the country as well. The students are already engaged on projects in the Seemanchal region, conducting workshops, and the institute has held an international conference in its short span. Much of the influence in driving Bihar's institutional strength through the MPLADS is derived from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's leadership who made it his sole focus since his first term. Cognisant of the legacy factors that pushed the state behind, he has focused on structural changes in his tenure that will prepare Bihar for a brighter future.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a key component of the Finance Commissions' plan to utilise latest technology and evidence to address to improve disaster preparedness. The 15th Finance Commission has allocated Rs. 2.28 lakh crores over a five-year period (2021-2026) in this regard. At the international stage too India has promoted its leadership in disaster resilience such as during the G20, SCO, BIMSTEC summits. While fund allocation is one aspect, we need greater institutional capacity to utilise the money and execute the right plans both in domestic and international platforms. The funds given to earthquake research and river research respectively are an attempt to build more institutional strength,both for Bihar and India.

What does language say about our nation's history?

Part 3 : The importance of researching about our past dialects and history

In his globally acclaimed book, 'Sapiens', Yuval Noah Harari takes the reader into the evolution of mankind with interesting insights and thought-provoking ideas. Among them is the role of languages played that deeply influenced the development of humanity. As Harari describes, language allowed human to think about complex ideas, gather in larger communities. Closer home, India's diversity is reflected in the large variations in culture, languages not just between states but also within each state. Our official list of scheduled languages put this number at 22. This has been narrowed down based on 19,500 languages and dialects as per Census. As is common in many cultures especially in north India, people identify with their mother tongue differently than the spoken language (read as bhasha and boli)

The history of languages says a lot about the history of India and even South Asia. And one important location that displayed the amalgamation of cultures and languages is the region of Bihar. The birthplace of Jainism, Buddhism and ancient Indian culture is treasure for historians.

One of my inspirations for understanding about the value of cultures and languages is the oft-forgotten thinkers Rahul Sankrityayan. While he is remembered for his writings in Hindi, Sankrityayan was said to be fluent in nearly 30 languages and has penned over 140 books with one of them "Madhya Asia Ka Itihas" fetching a Sahitya Akademi award in 1958. His practice of ghumakkadi (wandering) and subsequent writings inspired me to explore the value of Indian culture and expanded my worldview. Buddhism has three branches: Hinayana (Theravada), Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Vajrayana emerged with the inclusion of Tantric practices. In the 11th century, the important texts and scripts related to Vajrayana were destroyed when Nalanda University was burnt down.

To gather these, Rahul Sankrityayan traveled to Sri Lanka, where he was deeply influenced by Buddhism. He then made four trips to Tibet. After staying there for fifteen months, he studied many texts and brought back several manuscripts, most of which were written in the Tibetan language and remain unread to this day.

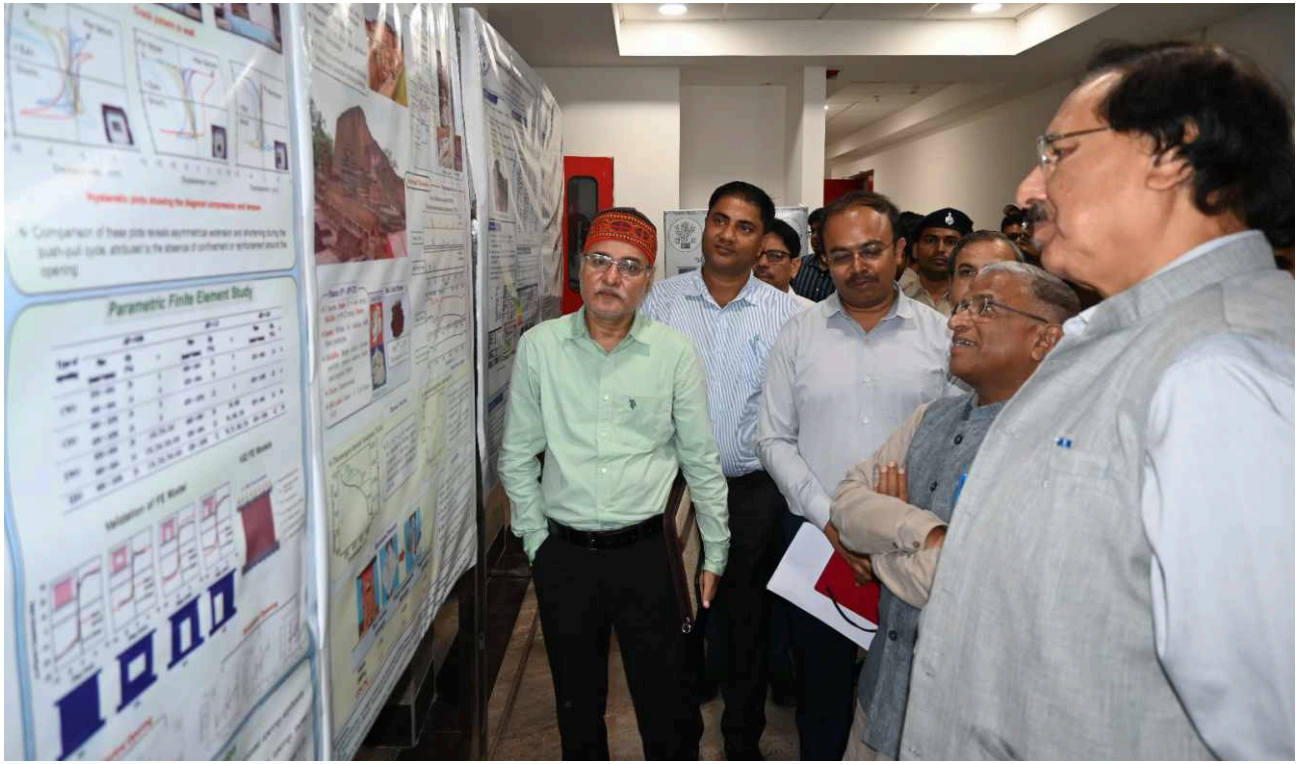
He managed to retrieve about 800 ancient scriptures and artefacts, a small part of the records that perished during the destruction of Nalanda libraries back to India. The religious literature and manuscripts brought from Tibet ninety years ago still remain unexplored. On the advice of K.P. Jayaswal,

Students giving a demonstration about the research on endangered languages

he handed over all the literary and historical evidence to the Patna Museum. Today many of these are saved in the Patna Museum. About eight years ago, some of these were part of a national exhibition in Delhi.

Behind the magnificent work of Sankrityayan, we must also realise the depth of culture and languages that still exists amongst us. Be it tribal languages, local dialects, and the wisdom they hold. In my first term as an MP, I dedicated part of my fund to the development for Centre for Endangered Languages (CELS). The building for the Centre was constructed at the cost of about Rs. 9.87 crores. The centre will focus on preserving and promoting Indian languages, folk languages, tribal languages, endangered dialects, among others. In the era of globalization, markets don't just dictate economy, but also the languages we speak. But India's history of languages must not be tied to these fast-paced changes. A holistic understanding of who we are, and what we stand for must guide us for the future. And as a Bihari, it would give me immense satisfaction if the knowledge emerging from this newly-built institute further improves our understanding of Indian history and protect the beautiful amalgamation of cultures nested in all these languages.

In the end, as underlined in the previous series too, the larger objective of every fund allocated under MPLADS is to reignite Bihar's institutional strength seeking inspiration from its rich history. And much of my ambitions to utilise a small fund for Bihar's development wouldn't have been possible without the backing of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who throughout his tenure across decades has taken keen interest in revival of Nalanda as well as reigniting the spiritual history of Bihar. He took keen interest in the work of Sankrityayan and experts were invited from the Centre for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath to catalog the material. The CELS too will play a key role in facilitating restoration and translation of such rare manuscripts.



While MPs contribute their fund in the construction, the University also attracts grants to develop the projects.

Rethinking future of Bihar

Part 4 : Reason behind funding a business innovation hub, a centre for public policy and AI centre through his MPLADS fund

In the post-World War II era, a young electrical engineer named Jack Kilby worked at Texas Instruments. By 1900s scientists were using vaccum tubes to power the early computers. Kilby tried to think of a different way to power these devices where wires could be done away with. His efforts eventually led to the development of a small device where all the electrical components that power a device were assembled on one plate. This was the first Integrated Circuit (IC) built in 1957 and Kilby was eventually recognized as the co-inventor of the IC that we now commonly refer as chips in electrical devices. At the time, very few would've predicted that the 21st century dominance would be driven by technological supremacy and access to high-end chips that has powered the era of Artificial Intelligence.

In 1994, I visited many well-known US universities such as Harvard and Stanford during a study visit. This was part of the United States Information Service Programme with selected senior journalists and editors. It transformed my understanding of how elite universities are linked to knowledge building that eventually influences every aspect of the government and societal actions. In the modern era, knowledge is the real currency. A quick peek at the unstable geopolitics today shows the rush among countries to attract the best talent looking for avenues beyond the shores of United States. In India, we have a unique confluence of talent pool and opportunities. As a large, diverse nation, our domestic markets require more and more skilled professionals in every sector. The world is paying a high premium on innovation and particularly in the field of technology. Well before the Universities in western world were set up, India too had a rich hub of knowledge with Nalanda and Vikramshila. But Bihar failed to capitalize on its rich history to build its knowledge hub for the modern era.

In the 1990s, when the Southern states were building technical and engineering institutes, Bihar was focused on Charwaha Vidyalaya (Shepherd's institute). The BIMARU tag wasn't an overnight phenomenon but a longer period of bad governance. The 90s in particular was the phase of technological evolution that laid the foundation for India's IT services. Aspiring students from Bihar would look for the first opportunity to exit out of the state to pursue the courses to benefit from the booming IT sector. Today, we are once again at a pivotal moment where Artificial Intelligence is reshaping our societies. The government too is focused on leveraging it for India's growth.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the emphasis on establishing a semi-conductor ecosystem and attracting the best talent is well-known. India is also reinventing its approach in building self-sufficiency in critical minerals and promoting more innovations in Artificial Intelligence (AI). While AI has become a buzzword in everyday conversations, its applications in society, its impact on our lives and the future that it holds is still a long journey ahead. We not only need more innovations, but also deeper understanding and research on its impacts. If India has to benefit from its potential, we also need more investments to retain our talent. And in this process, we must also invest in institution-building. The Union Government has already announced three AI Centres of Excellence.

In this journey where does Bihar stand? As much as the investments in emerging technology are focused around the western and southern India, there is a greater need to build the right ecosystems to promote growth in the relatively backward states. Under Nitish Kumar as Chief Minister, there has been a renewed focus in developing the right education ecosystem to foster new talent and develop in emerging sectors. It is with this principle that the MPLADS allocation was given in three different segments.

One, to develop an institute for Artificial Intelligence at Magadh University in Bodh Gaya with a fund allocation of Rs 20 crores. While the support will be related to building the infrastructure, the university on its part too will raise funding and apply for grants under key schemes at both state and national level. Sectors such as cybersecurity, robotics, machine learning have gained prominence in the age of AI-driven technological shifts. The institute is a small but important step in securing Bihar's interest in these areas.

The institute at Magadh holds significance given its legacy as a knowledge hub in Bodh Gaya. Further, the application of the research will help solve several complex issues within Bihar. For instance, Bihar is still an agrarian state and technology has a critical role in improving the standards of agriculture. AI can assist in identifying diseases driven by pests, monitoring and analysing groundwater levels as well as soil health. In the years to come, the use cases for AI and its influence on our lives will further expand. Technology's impact on improving transparency in governance must not be overlooked too. In states with lower institutional capacity, technology can bridge the time to catch up with other states. For instance, in both health and education, there are numerous applications to improve the standard of services and access to everyone.

Institutes like the one in Magadh will not only develop more professionals but also create thinkers to solve Bihar's problems. This same principle has been adopted in funding two more institutes in Patna. One of them is the Centre for Public Policy to be established at Chandragupt Institute of Management Patna (CIMP), and the third is a business incubation centre at CIMP as well. The idea is to replicate the

objectives that IIM-Ahmedabad serves in fostering innovations alongside promotion of entrepreneurship and management. Meanwhile, the public policy institute here will focus on cutting-edge research and work on various development consultancy projects with the state government and other organisations. Just like how top universities abroad feed into the policymaking apparatus, these centres in Bihar are aimed at creating a hub of high quality of evidence to make policy changes in the state.

CIMP has recently been declared as a Lead Knowledge Institute by NITI Aayog. The CIMP has already partnered with Georgia State University to ensure the students have access to high quality interdisciplinary policy studies. The two centres are being built with an assistance of Rs. 9.43 crores. It must be reiterated that for a developing nation like India, its demography and young talent will be central to its growth aspirations. And this is even more true for Bihar that has a larger, younger population. If opportunities are available locally to foster this talent, it will change the state's fortunes inevitably. As of December 2025, there are more than two lakh startups in the country and these startups have created 21 lakh plus jobs. Apart from large private capital investing in these startups, the government too has given various incentives across the years. The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) was launched in 2021 with a corpus of Rs. 945 crores. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has also contributed in catalyzing investments worth Rs. 21,276 crore in 1,173 startups. The intent of setting up the institutes in Patna and Gaya are focused on providing a similar ecosystem for Bihar where the local talent can work for the progress of the state.

Just like Aatmanirbhar Bharat requires us to be self-reliant in our development, Bihar needs institutions, talent and more funding support to stand on its legs. As Buddha's last words teach us - अप्पदीपोभव (Be a light unto yourself). With the right support and ecosystem, Bihar's Universities and its faculties too can compete with the rest of universities in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has regularly underlined that every state must have a roadmap in contributing to India's near-term target of a $5 trillion economy and the eventual ambition of a Vikasit Bharat by 2047. It is time Bihar improves its share in this growth journey.

During the Bhoomi-pujan ceremony of the institute at Magadh University with Hon'ble Governor Bihar Arif Mohammed Khan

Election as Deputy Chairman

Harivansh was elected as Deputy Chairman first on August 9, 2018, and re-elected to the position on September 14, 2020. Upon his election, Harivansh recounted his early influences in politics from the conduct of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan who also hailed from the same village, Sitab Diara. In his acceptance of felicitations, Harivansh recounted India's rich democratic traditions that shaped India's Parliamentary ethos. He assured the House of taking everyone along and conduct the business of the House with dignity and impartiality.

Chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu (right) congratulating Harivansh after being elected Deputy Chairman alongside Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anant Kumar and MoS Parliamentary Affairs Vijay Goel, Secretary General Rajya Sabha in 2018

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi after being elected as Deputy Chairman in 2018

Post of Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha

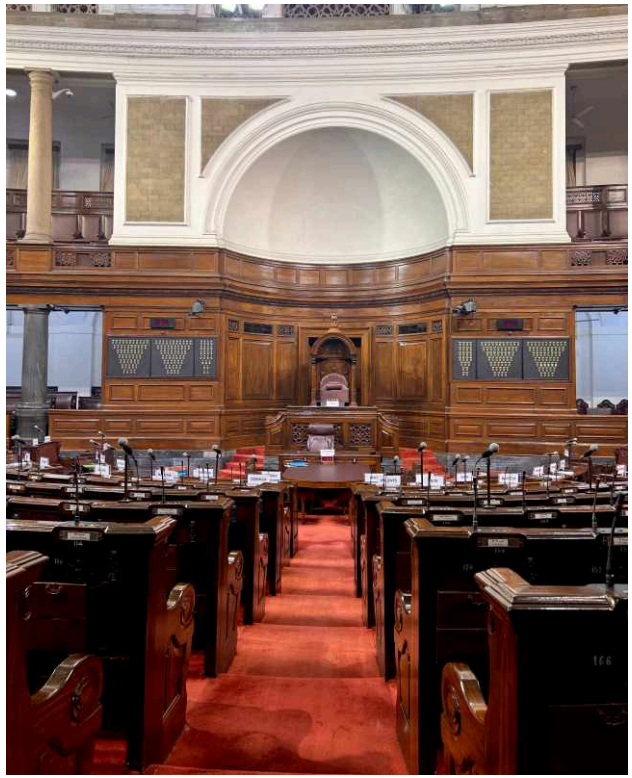
The position of Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha is provided Under Article 89 of the Indian Constitution. Since the Vice President of India is the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, the House also chooses from amongst its Members, a Deputy Chairman. In the absence of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman presides over the proceedings. The process of electing a Deputy Chairman requires any Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha to submit a motion proposing a name of a colleague for the position and to be seconded by another Member of Parliament. The member moving the motion must also submit a signed declaration of consent from the MP stating the willingness to serve as a Deputy Chairman. If there are motions proposing more than one candidate, then the majority of the House decides the outcome of the election.

No.	Name	Tenure
1.	Shri S.V. Krishna Moorthy Rao	31/05/1952 to 02/04/1956
2.	Shri S.V. Krishna Moorthy Rao	25/04/1956 to 01/03/1962
3.	Smt. Violet Alva	19/04/1962 to 02/04/1966
4.	Smt. Violet Alva	07/04/1966 to 16/11/1969
5.	Shri Bhaurao Dewaji Khobragade	17/12/1969 to 02/04/1972
6.	Shri Godey Murahari	13/04/1972 to 02/04/1974
7.	Shri Godey Murahari	13/04/1972 to 02/04/1974
8.	Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha	30/03/1977 to 02/04/1980
9.	Shri Shyam Lal Yadav	30/07/1980 to 02/04/1982
10.	Shri Shyam Lal Yadav	28/04/1982 to 29/12/1984
11.	Dr. Najma A. Heptulla	25/01/1985 to 20/01/1986
12.	Shri M.M. Jacob	26/02/1986 to 22/10/1986
13.	Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil	18/11/1986 to 05/11/1988
14.	Dr. Najma A. Heptulla	18/11/1988 to 04/07/1992
15.	Dr. Najma A. Heptulla	10/07/1992 to 04/07/1998
16.	Dr. Najma A. Heptulla	09/07/1998 to 10/06/2004
17.	Shri K. Rahman Khan	22/07/2004 to 02/04/2006
18.	Shri K. Rahman Khan	12/05/2006 to 02/04/2012
19.	Prof. P.J. Kurien	21/08/2012 to 01/07/2018
20.	Shri Harivansh	09/08/2018 to 09/04/2020
21.	Shri Harivansh	14/09/2020 to 09/04/2026

The Deputy Chairman is also part of the Business Advisory Committee, that recommends time allocated for various debates. The Deputy Chairman also heads the Committee on Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme and Committee of Privileges.

After being elected to the office, Presiding Officers rise above party lines and observe impartiality in their conduct. Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Deputy Chairmen have continued to keep themselves away from active party politics without formally leaving their parties.

Once elected, the Deputy Chairman as a Presiding Officer does not participate in legislative debates and does not raise interventions such as Questions, Special Mentions in their individual capacity.



While he was elected in April, Harivansh took oath as Member of Parliament for the second time in July 2020 owing to prevailing Covid-19 pandemic at the time. Within a few months he was renominated as the NDA candidate for the election to the post of Deputy Chairman and assumed this post on September 9, 2020.

During his eight years as Deputy Chairman since 2018, he has remained committed to holding the Parliamentary proceedings in an impartial manner and remained calm even when faced with challenges of disruption and members repeatedly entering the Well. The Deputy Chairman presides over the House in the absence of Chairman. As per past practice, Chairmen have often conducted the House proceedings during the Question Hour at the start of the day and occasionally during legislative business. The House is then usually presided over by Deputy Chairman and occasionally by a member from the panel of Chair. Harivansh has regularly presided over the House even during longer sittings.

Out of the total 273 bills passed till February 2026, 197 Bills i.e. 50 per cent of all legislation passed or returned during the relevant sessions—were transacted while he was in the Chair, underscoring both the trust reposed in him by the House and his steady stewardship of proceedings. These Bills spanned a wide policy spectrum, including constitutional amendments, economic and financial reforms, social justice measures, institutional restructuring, and governance reforms.

For full list of Bills introduced and passed : Scan QR code

Excerpts from felicitations and proceedings

Felicitations from Election as Dy. Chairman August 9, 2018

Harivansh Ji has a distinctive quality. In his newspaper, he once ran a column titled 'What Should Our MP Be Like', without knowing that one day he himself would become an MP. He led a wide public conversation around that idea. I believe that the ideals he articulated then have now found a meaningful opportunity for fulfilment.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

We have had the opportunity to observe Harivansh Ji as a Member of Parliament over several years. Whenever he has spoken in this House, he has done so with thorough preparation. I believe that someone who has consistently upheld such standards will further enhance the dignity of this House as Deputy Chairman.

- Leader of House Arun Jaitley

You are also a journalist, and I am confident that if a journalist becomes Deputy Chairman, stronger links will develop with fellow journalists and greater attention will be given to parliamentary proceedings. Instead of focusing on outside news, more emphasis can be placed on the work of Parliament. In this effort, your experience in journalism will surely be of value to us.

- Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad

Felicitations after being elected Dy. Chairman (Sep 14, 2020)

I rarely see Harivanshji, without a smile on his face. That is a great quality in conducting the proceedings of the House in spite of even the grave provocations at times. I once again extend my best wishes to Harivanshji. I am sure he continues to serve this august House with the same zeal, tenacity and vigour that is worthy of stature and dignity of this House. I wish him all the success for the Office he is going to adorn and for the second time in a row.

- Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu

"I warmly congratulate Shri Harivansh Ji on being elected Deputy Chairman of this House for the second time, on behalf of the entire House and the people of the country. The integrity he has shown in social work and journalism has always earned my deep respect. The regard and warmth I feel for him are shared by those who know him closely, and today that same respect is reflected across this House. This trust and goodwill are his own hard-earned capital. His work ethic and the manner in which he conducts proceedings make this only natural. His impartial role in the House strengthens democracy. I had once said that on this parliamentary field, umpires face more pressure than players. Ensuring Members adhere to rules is a demanding task. I was confident he would handle this responsibility well, and even those who did not know him earlier have come to trust his judgment and decisions."

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi

"Warm congratulations to Shri Harivansh Ji on becoming Deputy Chairman. He has been elected to this position for the second time, and over the past few years we have seen how, even in a short span, he has made every effort to do justice to representatives of all parties in this House. He is a respected scholar and a writer, and those who come from this field treat everyone equally. I am confident that in the days ahead, he will continue to give equal attention to the right, the left and the centre."

- Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad

For the last two years when he was the Deputy Chairman of the House, we have seen him how with all honesty and all sincerity and with utmost impartiality, he has been, in your absence, conducting this House very, very nicely. We are all impressed with his ability, his good manners and his deep knowledge about parliamentary procedures. As everybody knows and as hon. Prime Minister was mentioning, he spent his entire life in journalism and, usually, journalists look upon things from different angles. So, he being a very reputed journalist all his life, usually, we hope that when he will be conducting the House, his eyes will be in all corners of the House and on all Members of the House, irrespective of which Party a Member belongs, either a big party, a major party or a small party.

- Prasanna Acharya (MP BJD – Odisha)

Remarks by members during their retirement

"...Deputy Chairman Sahib was once my bench mate here, and that will always stay with me. He is a very simple person, straightforward in his conduct. At times, people may feel uncomfortable with straightforwardness, but those who are direct are often misunderstood..."

- Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad (09.02.2021, 253rd Session)

"Sir, when I worked, I worked under your leadership, in the Chair and in the House. Whenever I went to you, Sir, the kind of affection that I got was such that it wasn't the Deputy Chairman to me, it was like an elder brother who taught me how to go about my work, whether it was in the Chair or out of the Chair. Sir, I thank you so much for that and for all the love and affection that you have given me as an elder brother."

- Dr. Sasmit Patra (31.03.2022, 256th Session)

Valedictory Address: Hon'ble Chairmen at various times have mentioned about the role of Dy. Chairman in running the House

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Hon'ble Deputy Chairman who afforded valuable suggestions and guidance, and exemplified the highest standards of Parliamentary practices.

258th Session (December 23, 2022)

I extend my appreciation to the Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Shri Harivansh Ji, who has always been around with his real counsel, advice, suggestions, and impactful contributions. He has majorly devoted his time, even while not sitting on the Chair, to ensure qualitative, greater productivity, both in the Panel of Vice-Chairpersons and the Secretariat.

265th Session (August 9, 2024)

Committee membership as Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha

S. No.	Committee	Position	Term	Meetings Held	Meetings Attended
1.	Business Advisory Committee*	Member	Aug. 2018 to April, 2020 and Sept. 2020 onwards	74	69**
2.	Committee of Privileges*	Chairman	Aug. 2018 to April, 2020 and Sept. 2020 onwards	44	44
3.	Committee on Rules*	Member	Aug. 2018 to April, 2020 and Sept. 2020 onwards	0	0
4.	General Purposes Committee, Rajya Sabha*	Member	27 Oct. 2018 to April, 2020 and Sept. 2020 onwards	1	1
5.	Committee on Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)*	Chairman	Aug. 2018 to April, 2020 and Sept. 2020 onwards	13	13
6.	Committee on Provision of Computers to Members of Rajya Sabha (PCMRS)	Chairman	Aug. 2018 to Nov. 2019	1	1
7.	Content Advisory Committee of Rajya Sabha Television	Chairman	May 2019 to April, 2020	1	1
8.	Committee on Maintenance of Heritage Character and Development of Parliament House Complex	Member	10 Oct. 2018 to April, 2020	-	-
9.	Rajbhasha, Kshetriya Bhasha Shabdawali Samiti	Chairman	March 2021 – Feb 2022	3	3

*Updated until 31.12.2025
**Absenteeism owing to Business Advisory Committee meeting held when Dy. Chairman was presiding over the House.

As Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Shri Harivansh, in accordance with parliamentary Rules and established precedents, served ex-officio member of the General Purposes Committee, Rules Committee, and Business Advisory Committee, all of which are chaired by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

In addition, he chaired important standing committees of the Rajya Sabha, notably the Committee on Privileges, the Committee on Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), and the Committee on Provision of Computers to Members of the Rajya Sabha. He also headed certain special-purpose committees, including the Content Advisory Committee for Rajya Sabha Television and the Rajbhasha Kshetriya Bhasha Shabdawali Samiti. Further, he was a member of the Joint Committee on Maintenance of Heritage Character and Development of the Parliament House Complex.

Harivansh has attended almost all his committee meetings with the only exception being the Business Advisory Committee, where he attended 69 of the 74 meetings held during the relevant period. He could not attend some of these meetings since it was held during the Parliamentary proceedings where the Deputy Chairman was presiding over the House.

Notable work has been undertaken by two key committees chaired by Harivansh - the Committee on Privileges and the Committee on MPLADS— both of which dealt with matters of significant institutional and public importance.

The Committee of Privileges, Rajya Sabha

- A total of 16 Reports of the Committee of Privileges, Rajya Sabha had been presented so far under the Chairmanship of Shri Harivansh, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha.
- The Committee of Privilege, Rajya Sabha, in its 75th Report, for the first time recommended certain mandatory attributes in relation to apology tendered by the Members found guilty of breach of privilege or contempt of the House.
- In 2023, the Committee of Privileges, Rajya Sabha held a record 22 meetings in the year to expeditiously dispose of cases under its consideration.
- The Committee of Privileges, Rajya Sabha in its 74th Report, for the first time, dealt with a case involving breach of privilege arising out of alleged videography of the proceedings of the House and its dissemination on social media by a Member.

Work in Committee on MPLADS, Rajya Sabha

Harivansh was Chairman of the Committee on MPLADS w.e.f 21st August, 2018 and continued to Chair it after re-election as Deputy Chairman in 2020.

Year	Date	Total No. of Meetings	Witness
2018	11/09/2018	1	Officials from the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation were present in the meetings.
2019	22/02/2019 12/07/2019 05/09/2019	3	
2020	03/01/2020 14/12/2020	2	
2021	12/11/2021	1	
2022	08/06/2022	1	
2023	13/04/2023 06/10/2023	2	
2024	20/03/2024 16/04/2024	2	
2025	13/01/2025 26/05/2025	2	

- One Study Visit was undertaken by the Committee on MPLADS to Kolkata, Imphal and Guwahati from 14th November to 20th November, 2018 in which the pending MPLADS works in West Bengal and all North Eastern States wee reviewed alongwith the concerned MPs and the officials of those States.
- The procedure for undertaking rehabilitation and reconstruction works in calamity-affected areas under MPLADS was changed during the meeting held on 11th September, 2018 by doing away with the requirement of Committee's approval for the list of works.
- New Guidelines were issued by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation in 2023 after due deliberations with the Committee.
- Accountability of erring officials has been fixed in the new Guidelines, following repeated recommendations of the Committee, including in the case of J. P. N. Singh, former member, Rajya Sabha.
- Transparency in the Scheme was enhanced, following repeated recommendations of the Committee, through the introduction of the e-SHAKSHI portal and a new fund-flow system.
- A Mobile App (MPLADS-eSAKSHI) and the e-SHAKSHI Portal were created after deliberations with the Committee.
- The practice of setting up kiosks/helpdesks to address queries related to the MPLADS Scheme for Members and their PA/PS during Parliamentary Sessions has been in place since 2024.

Notably, the Committee under him aimed at removing all bottlenecks and lacuna inherent in the implementation of the scheme with a view to making it more transparent and effective mainly by issuing new guidelines and with the use of new technology.

Work in the 'Official Language-Regional Language Terminology Committee'

Under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chairman of Rajya Sabha, M Venkaiah Naidu, the seventh and eighth meetings of the Hindi Advisory Committee of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat were held on 27.12.2018 and 03.10.2019, respectively. Following the decisions taken in these meetings and the 29th meeting of the Official Language Implementation Committee, the Hon'ble Chairman of Rajya Sabha constituted a 'Official Language-Regional Language Terminology Committee' on 8 March 2021 under the chairmanship of the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha. This committee was tasked with preparing a dictionary/ terminology comprising approximately 500-700 simple words, incorporating prevalent words from all major regional languages for secretarial use in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

The Committee led by Deputy Chairman Harivansh submitted its report on January 20, 2022 to the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha M. Venkaiah Naidu.

Main Recommendations of the Committee:

(i) The committee recommended that English words used in Hindi speeches delivered by members in the House should only be transliterated into Devanagari in the Hindi version of the Parliamentary Debates (Official Report), and not translated into Hindi. Their Hindi equivalent synonyms may be provided in brackets.

(ii) The committee also recommended that for difficult key words in the Hindi translations of parliamentary reports, official reports of parliamentary debates, and other parliamentary documents, the parallel English words should also be transliterated into Devanagari and provided in brackets.

(iii) The committee further recommended that the synonyms suggested by the should be used as far as possible in the translation of all documents of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

Parliamentary engagements in India

At the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan to commemorate Constitution Day in 2024

In his official engagements in India, the Deputy Chairman is closely involved in several Parliamentary Conferences. These include the All India Presiding Officers Conferences (AIPOC), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India region. Additionally, he has been part of various Parliamentary programmes hosted in New Delhi and several commemorative functions of the Parliamentary Committees across the country. These conferences serve as an important platform for Presiding Officers to deliberate on the functioning of the legislative institutions as well as identify various avenues to strengthen them.

On the Parliamentary functioning, his speeches have focused on the challenges before presiding officers in addressing disruptions, improving functioning of committees, role of legislatures in preparing of future policy requirements, improving budget scrutiny, among others. During his speeches and engagements, Harivansh has consistently focused on a progressive approach in building legislative institutions for the needs of the 21st century.

One of the key features of his tenure has been the frequent engagement with the North-Eastern states as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Zone 3 conferences. The Deputy Chairman used this platform to deliberate and underline the increasing focus of the Union Government in improving the infrastructure and economic prospects of the region. Additionally, he also highlighted the need to find cohesive regional solutions to local policy challenges and aspirations. During these visits, he has also actively interacted with local communities, the diverse cultural practices within each state and encouraged the work of local artisans in contributing to the Indian economy.

During the CPA India Zone 3 conference in Nagaland in 2025

Throughout his engagements, the Deputy Chairman has sought to provide new pathways and innovative ideas in strengthening the legislature's image. Another overarching theme of his speeches has been the emphasis on state-led development in achieving the ambition of a developed India by 2047. He has urged Presiding officers to ensure that legislature effectively scrutinises the services that are squarely under the state domain such as health, education, land reforms, urban governance.

Emphasising on the impact of technology, he has highlighted various ways to make the institution more efficient. In his engagements he often speaks about the role of Artificial Intelligence and the steps required for it to be adopted in our legislative institutions. While underlining the need for synergy between Parliament and State Assemblies, he has called for developing AI with a hybrid approach making human oversight an integral feature for its application.

List of National Conferences attended (AIPOC, CPA India, CPA India Regional)

All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC)

S.No.	Conference	Venue	Date	Speeches
1	79th AIPOC	Dehradun, Uttarakhand	18-19 Dec, 2019	2
2	80th AIPOC	Kevadiya Gujarat	25 Nov, 2020	2
3	81st AIPOC	New Delhi (Online)	15 Sep, 2021	1
4	82nd AIPOC	Shimla, Himachal Pradesh	17-18 Nov, 2021	3
5	83rd AIPOC	Jaipur, Rajasthan	11-12 Jan, 2023	3
6	84th AIPOC	Mumbai, Maharashtra	27-28 Jan, 2024	2
7	85th AIPOC	Patna, Bihar	20-21 Jan, 2025	2
8	86th AIPOC	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	19-21 Jan, 2026	3

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zonal Conference

S.No.	Conference	Venue	Date	Speeches
1	18th CPA Zone III	Itanagar, Arunchal Pradesh	12-13 May, 2022	3
2	19th CPA Zone III	Gangtok, Sikkim	23-24 Feb, 2023	3
3	20th CPA Zone III	Shillong, Meghalaya	29-30 Jul, 2023	2
4	21st CPA Zone III	Aizawl, Mizoram	27-28 Sep, 2024	2
5	22nd CPA Zone III	Kohima, Nagaland	10-11 Nov, 2025	3
6	Annual conference of CPA Zone II	Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh	30 Jun-1 Jul, 2025	4
7.	Young Legislators' Conference of CPA Zone 6	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh	30-31 Mar, 2026	1
8.	1st Conference of CPA Zone 7	Panaji, Goa	9 April, 2026	2

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Conference

S.No.	Conference	Venue	Date	Speeches
1	7th CPA India	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	16-17 Jan, 2020	1
2	8th CPA India	Guwahati, Assam	11-12 Apr, 2022	2
3	9th CPA India	Udaipur, Rajasthan	21-22 Aug, 2023	2
4	10th CPA India	New Delhi	23-24 Sep, 2024	1
5	11th CPA India	Bengaluru, Karnataka	11-12 Sep, 2025	2

As part of his engagements, Deputy Chairman Harivansh has visited 21 states and 2 Union Territories

Floral Tributes

The Parliament holds an annual calendar of floral tributes for former political leaders, past Prime Ministers, and social reformers in the complex on their birth anniversary. These leaders have been commemorated inside the complex at various locations with a significant number accommodated with a portrait in the Central Hall of the Samvidhan Sadan.

Since November 15, 2021, the government has honored the tribal heroes by celebrating Birsa Munda's birth anniversary as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas' in Parliament premises, New Delhi

Many other popular figures who shaped Indian history have been commemorated through statues in the precincts of the Parliament. Overall, there are 37 events for birth anniversaries and other additional events are organized throughout the year. Attending every event is a custom Harivansh has maintained since his election to the Rajya Sabha since 2014.

(Above) Commemorating the birth anniversary of first Lok Sabha Speaker G.V Mavalankar; at the floral tribute on the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel with Hon'ble Chairman C.P Radhakrishnan at Samvidhan Sadan

At a commemorative event celebrating the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the Central Hall Samvidhan Sadan

At the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack. Honour the security personnel with floral tribute.

Floral tribute on birth anniversary of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. With Chairperson of Congress Parliamentary Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge to left of Harivansh. On his right Kiren Rijiju, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs

Engagement with Rajya Sabha interns : ‘Adapting in the age of Technology’

As Deputy Chairman, Harivansh addressed a wide range of audiences across the country. While the general expectation is to speak about the Parliament, politics, and his earlier experience as a Journalist, Harivansh has utilised the opportunity to create new themes for engagement particularly with students. One such area is engaging on the evolution of technology. The young India today is well versed with the latest gadgets and online trends, however, there is limited context about India’s journey in reaching this stage of development and the tole of its innovation and human resources in making advances in technology. This lecture on India and evolution in a technology is part of interaction with students and early-career professionals during the Rajya Sabha Internship Programmes. It covers inspirational stories of innovators around the world, the Deputy Chairman’s experiences of seeing technology evolve since the 60s, and the lessons for the path ahead.

Addressing one of the sessions on adapting in the age of technology to the Rajya Sabha interns in August 2025. While the youth today feels at ease with new technology but maintaining a healthy relation with these developments are critical in human development

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn”

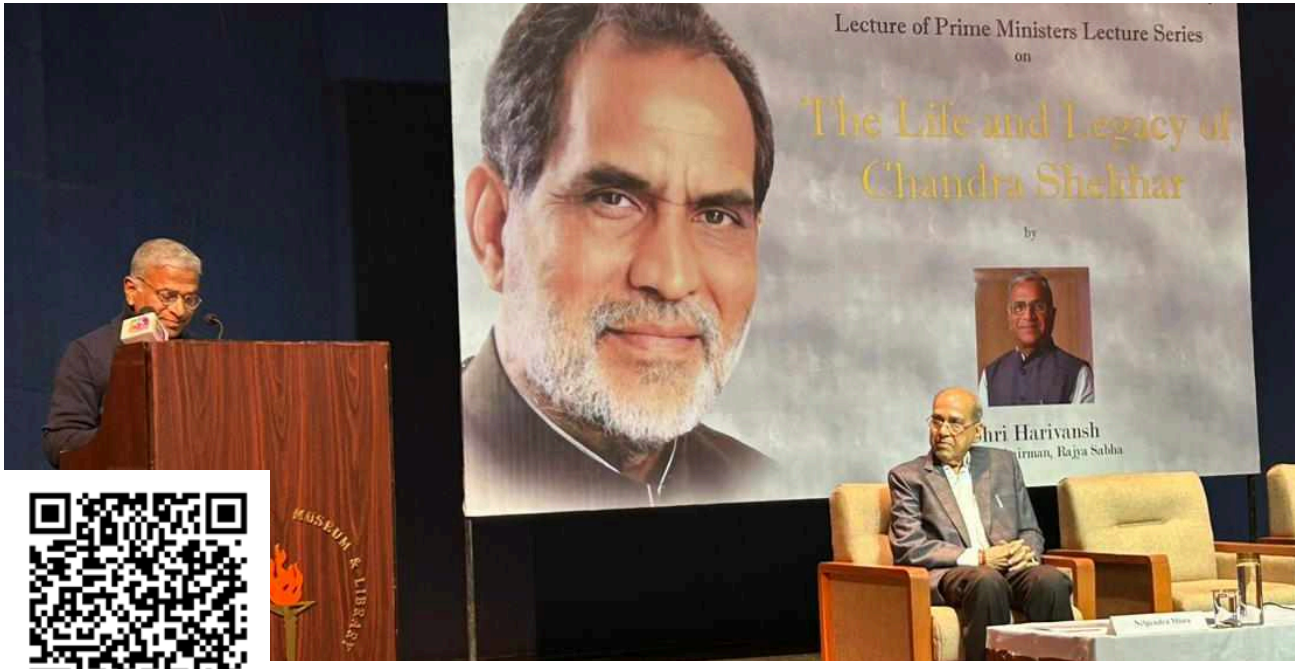
Excerpt from American writer, futurist Alvin Toffler’s book ‘Future Shock’ published in 1970.

Memorial Lectures

Harivansh is regularly invited across the country to share his insights on politics, society, and media. Given his long experience in journalism and observing politics from close quarters, he also delivered various memorial lectures commemorating legacy of iconic leaders. Just as writing long analytical articles became a hallmark of Harivansh's journalistic work, he likewise prefers extended and substantive engagement in dialogue. Delivering memorial lectures is one such avenue. While commemorating their legacies, he also ensures that new aspects of their lives can be shared with the audience through extensive research from the archives. Among the notable lectures were the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Lecture, Nanaji Deshmukh Memorial Lecture, Jayaprakash Narayan Memorial Lecture, Shesh Narayan Singh Memorial Lecture, Ramchandra Khan Memorial Lecture, and K. N. Sahay Memorial Lecture, among others. Below is a summary of two such prominent lectures.

Prime Minister's Lecture Series: The Life and Legacy of Chandra Shekhar

In December 2023, he delivered the fifth edition of the lecture series hosted by the Prime Ministers Museum and Library in New Delhi. As former Additional Information Advisor to the former PM and hailing from the same district, Ballia, Harivansh provided nuanced insights on how the brief period of Chandra Shekhar as PM saw bold decisions that averted the country slipping into bankruptcy. The lecture also covered important aspects of Chandra Shekhar's personal life that underlined his deep ideological roots and the journey from humble roots to leading the nation. Harivansh has also authored a book 'Chandra Shekhar: The Last Icon of Ideological Politics' published in 2019.



In his PM Lecture Series, Harivansh narrated various anecdotes about Chandra Shekhar highlighting the role of values and conviction in public life

To access full lecture scan QR Code

Dr. Rajendra Prasad Memorial lecture, Prasar Bharati

In November 2024, Harivansh delivered the prestigious Rajendra Prasad Memorial Lecture, a series organized annual by Prasar Bharti since 1969. His initial part of the lecture covered several unknown insights about India's first President. The theme of the lecture was focused on the India's rising role in the global order. In this lecture, he covered the range of challenges that the country faced since independence and how the economy has evolved. He covered various examples from the last decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership that changed global perception about India, as well as displayed notable economic shifts.

To access full lecture scan QR Code

Strengthening India's Parliamentary Diplomacy

During his tenure in Rajya Sabha, first as a Member of Parliament and later as the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh was part of various Parliamentary delegations representing India. The Deputy Chairman as a Presiding Officer represents the country alongside the Hon'ble Speaker Lok Sabha in various Parliamentary conferences. Among the more prominent events held annually are the general meeting of the Inter Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth, P20 – the Parliamentary conference of the G20 nations. India being the largest democracy plays an important role in strengthening the voice of democratic nations through Parliamentary diplomacy.

Delivering an address during the P20 Speakers Summit in Brazil

At successive Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), he underscored the centrality of parliaments in strengthening multilateralism, advancing peace, and ensuring democratic accountability. The interventions addressed fair and free trade, global tax cooperation, artificial intelligence and democracy, and the role of legislatures in making international relations more inclusive and effective.

With former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the Indian Parliamentary delegation's visit to Tokyo on 2019

These conferences provide an opportunity to learn about the stand of the Parliaments, as the apex representative policy-making institutions in their respective countries, on the prevailing global conditions and the issues confronting the world. Given the recent geopolitical shifts, these platforms also serve as a medium for India to lead the conversations on aspirations and challenges faced by the Global South.

At South Asian, Eurasian, and Commonwealth Speakers' forums, he underscored the need to ensure food and nutrition security, climate action, youth employment, gender equality, and education for peace, stressing that legislative consensus is critical to translating global commitments like SDG into national actions.

At the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference (CSPOC) meetings, the focus is on parliamentary innovation, cyber and physical security, capacity-building of members and staff, and the evolving responsibilities of Presiding Officers in times of crisis, including during and after the pandemic. In BRICS Parliamentary Forums and P20 Summits under the aegis of G20, we advocated climate justice, a just energy transition, disaster resilience, and the ethical use of technology, while emphasizing on the South-South cooperation and Africa partnerships. At the climate-focused sessions in these Conferences, I reinforced India's leadership on sustainable lifestyles, renewable energy, and inclusive growth.

As a Member of Parliament visited the UN General Assembly and the 131st Assembly of Inter Parliamentary Union.

As Deputy Chairman he led 12 delegations abroad and was a member of 14 delegations led by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla

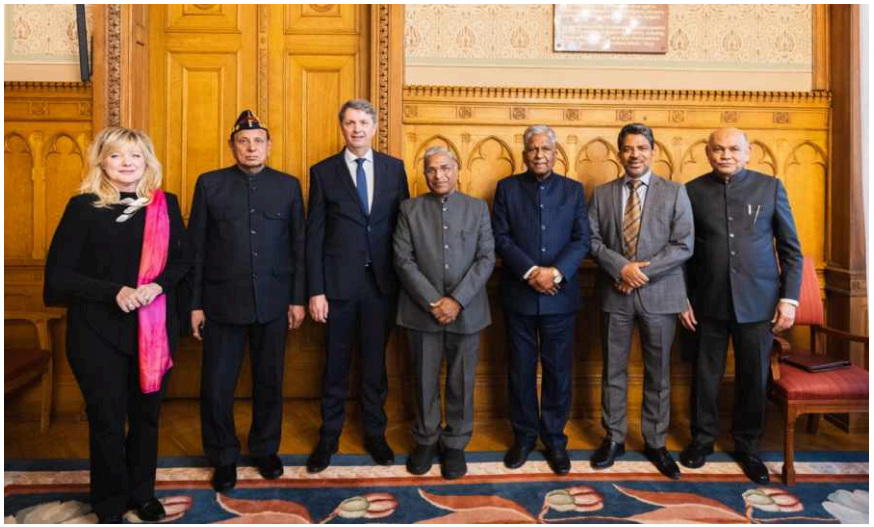
Detailed list of Parliamentary engagements at international level available in annexure

In May 2025, the Government of India nominated Harivansh to be India's representative alongside Deputy Chief Minister Nagaland Y. Patton at the inauguration of Pope Leo IV held at the Vatican City.

Apart from travelling for conferences, the Indian Parliament holds bilateral meetings with various Presiding officers visiting India. Several countries also have a Parliamentary friendship group that foster more vibrant dialogue between legislators of respective countries.

Extending India's message of peace and harmony at Pope Leo IV's inauguration at Vatican City

With Deputy Speaker of UK House of Commons Nus Ghani interacting on adoption of technology and AI in the Indian Parliament



In 2024 Harivansh led a Parliamentary delegation for a bilateral visit to Hungary

With a delegation of Members of Parliament from the European Union ahead of India's Free Trade Agreement with EU

Interviews on Sansad TV

As a Parliamentarian and as Deputy Chairman, Harivansh has regularly expressed his views on the overall functioning of Parliament, India's growth aspirations, and strengthening legislative institutions. Alongside writing regularly in leading national dailies, Harivansh has regularly given interviews after Presiding officers' Conferences in India summarising the key focus areas of the conference and his detailed perspective on the issues taken up for deliberations. He also regularly shares outcomes of various delegations he has led at multilateral forums such as P20, Inter-Parliamentary Union, BRICS Parliamentary Summit, and several such events. These interviews also provide the viewers a simplified perspective of the work as a Deputy Chairman and the importance of placing India's perspective at various international forums. Alongside interviews on Parliament, he has drawn upon his long career in journalism to comment extensively on the role of media and made various observations about the changing face of the profession as well as the influence of technology.

One of the earliest interviews of Harivansh on the erstwhile Rajya Sabha TV on March 15, 2015

In one of his earliest interviews to the erstwhile Rajya Sabha TV in 2015 (now Sansad TV), he has shared various anecdotes about the importance of ethics, discipline in public life.

A similar detailed interview of Harivansh in September 2019 titled 'Guftagoo' focuses on his journey from a small island village of Sitab Diara to journalism and eventually to Parliament. It is one of the few interviews where he speaks in detail about his political and cultural influences.

In 2025, the Parliament of India undertook a unique initiative of hoisting a Sahitya Conclave (literary meet), to invite public figures discussing Indian literature, culture, cinema, sports. These discussions also displayed India's evolution as a nation and how its success in various sectors were shaped. Harivansh was part of one such discussion where he has elaborated on his idea of India, the evolution of literature and journalism alongside various comments on contemporary politics.

Harivansh has given 25 interviews to Sansad TV on various subjects. All video links can be accessed on this QR code

Life in the Public Eye

Despite the rise of social media, multimedia and new media, Harivansh has consistently maintained that while new technology and its reach cannot be ignored, members must still focus on personal touch in strengthening grassroots development. Even after becoming a Member of Parliament, he continued to give priority to meeting people and visiting relatively backward areas.

Throughout his twelve-year parliamentary journey, he remained committed to this tradition of direct engagement, often undertaking long journeys. From villages and small towns to major cities and institutions, he continued conversations on social, educational, political, economic, literary and cultural issues across different parts of the country. After assuming responsibilities first as MP and later as Deputy Chairman, he applied a single criterion while accepting invitations: the relevance of the subject or programme, regardless of its scale or grandeur.

At Mahatma Gandhi's residence in Wardha Mahrashtra which Gandhi renamed as 'Sevagram'

Alongside his Parliamentary responsibilities, Harivansh has been closely involved with delivering speeches at educational institutions and participating in various social activities

As a result, he has engaged with writers who have worked quietly for years on meaningful themes, attended modest school programmes, visited orphanages, and participated in cultural events for children with disabilities. During Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary year, he held dialogues with youth in several institutions on Gandhi's relevance. During Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, he spoke at multiple forums on the theme of "Future India." In this way, he delivered lectures on diverse subjects across different regions of the country.

Harivansh believes that direct dialogue strengthens mutual understanding, and that conversations rooted in personal interaction travel far. Some of the other key themes of his lecture series were the relevance of Gandhi, the importance of technology, and the future of India. These lectures included prominent memorial lectures, interactions at reputed literature festivals, and programmes organized by media institutions and press clubs across the country.

Year-wise Participation in Public Events

As Member of Parliament

2014	-	13	2016	-	12
2015	-	06	2017	-	06

After Becoming Deputy Chairman

2018	-	21	2022	-	44
2019	-	56	2023	-	51
2020	-	11	2024	-	50
2021	-	23	2025	-	41
			2026*	–	21

* Upto February 2026

For detailed list of events attended in India apart from official Parliamentary engagements scan QR code

Commitment to Society

After entering parliamentary life, Harivansh participated in numerous programmes over the past twelve years. While managing his official commitments, he continued to visit places and attend gatherings that had mattered to him since his days in journalism and also engaged with marginalised communities, especially children and adolescents from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds.

He became Deputy Chairman in 2018. The following Republic Day, instead of a prominent venue, he chose to hoist the national flag at a small, little-known orphanage in Ranchi. The Aanchal Shishu Ashram is located in the heart of the city. On 26 January 2019, he hoisted the flag with the children there and spent several hours with them in conversation.

In a similar spirit, he visited Panjwar village in Siwan district, Bihar, on 18 April 2023. It is a unique village where, through the efforts of karmayogi Ghanshyam Shukla, activities ranging from education and sports to cultural festivals are organised. Harivansh interacted with young girls excelling in sports and encouraged them, boosting their confidence.

He also visited Mahathu village in Aurangabad district, Bihar, where Sita Navami celebrations had been initiated with the aim of beginning the observance of Sita Ji's birth anniversary in Bihar and, through it, fostering a culture of celebrating the birth of girls in villages. He attended this programme in the intense summer heat of May 2023, travelling by road from Ranchi. He motivated young girls in the village and conveyed that society should celebrate the birth of daughters with the same enthusiasm shown for sons.

On 24 October 2025, Harivansh visited the tribal children's hostel run by Bharat Sevashram Sangha in Ranchi and spent several hours in conversation with them. For such engagements, he would often take the initiative himself and continue these visits from time to time.

Interacting with youth of Birsa Munda Hostel in Ranchi in 2025

Conversations with Youth

Even before entering parliamentary life, Harivansh, as a journalist and editor, had a strong interest in engaging with students at educational institutions. After becoming an MP, he placed academic programmes high on his priorities. Driven by a personal commitment to interact with young people, he did not limit himself to events in major cities alone, but often undertook long road journeys to reach remote areas for such engagements.After becoming a Member of Parliament, he delivered lectures at the reputed HD Jain College in Ara on the theme of the future of education and education shaping the future, which drew wide attention across Bihar's academic circles.

In the same spirit, his lecture at Jharkhand's reputed Netarhat Residential School was published and distributed among students. He travelled to remote areas such as Chand in Kaimur district of Bihar to interact with schoolchildren, and also engaged with students in Panjwar village of Siwan district. These are only a few examples. Alongside this, he continued regular visits to major universities and educational institutions, including leading technical institutes such as IITs, premier management institutions like IIMs, and state universities.

For full List of engagements in educational institutions scan QR code

Between 2018-2025, Harivansh has delivered lectures in 55 schools and Universities. These include special lectures, thematic events and convocation ceremonies.

Interacting with students during a visit to Gorakhpur

At Literature Festivals and Literary Events

From an academic standpoint, Harivansh was never formally a student of literature. However, his affinity for and deep attachment to literature dates back to his adolescence. The impressions left by Surdas's Bhramar Geet, the Bharthari geet of ascetics, and the couplets of the Ramcharitmanas heard during childhood played a significant role in shaping his sensibility. In his village, where he was born and spent his childhood and teenage years, has long been a fertile ground for literary traditions. Later, Banaras, the city where Harivansh pursued his education, has for centuries been a renowned centre that has shaped and expanded literature and culture. All these influences contributed to the formation of his personality.

Consequently, even when he chose Economics as his field of study, his engagement with literature did not diminish; rather, it continued to grow. He developed a firm conviction that literature is not merely a collection of words, but a powerful force that shapes society and the human mind. It also possesses the capacity to drive social transformation. Harivansh often reiterates that writers and poets are not merely spectators of social change in their times, but are in fact the "Engineers of the Human Soul."

With this deep understanding of the importance of literature and a sustained attachment to it, Harivansh continued to accord priority to literary-events even after transitioning from journalism to parliamentary life. He actively participated in literary gatherings across the country. Whether major literature festivals, literary conclaves, and book fairs, or smaller book launch events, he has taken part in all of them with equal enthusiasm. Over the past twelve years, while discharging responsibilities as Deputy Chairman, participation in literary events remained a priority for him.

These engagements include, among many others, the Sahitya Aaj Tak; the Tata Literature Festival organised by the Tata Steel Group in Ranchi; the Banaras Literature Festival; Bundelkhand Literature Festival; Khajuraho Literature Festival; Kalinga Literature Festival; Patna Book Fair; Deoghar Book Fair; National Book Fair; the Sahitya Akademi's international literary festival Unmesh; Jamshedpur Literary Festival; and Gorakhpur Literature Festival, along with dozens of other prestigious events.

For full List of engagements in literary festivals scan QR code

At the launch of the 50th book of Smt. Sudha Murty, Member of Parliament in Delhi in 2025

Opposing Discretionary Quota

There was a provision for granting admissions to Kendriya Vidyalayas under the discretionary quota for each Member of Parliament. Every year, Kendriya Vidyalayas admitted children under this special category. After becoming a Rajya Sabha member, Harivansh too was entitled to recommend admissions. He chose to use this privilege for families truly in need and deserving candidates.

On this issue, Harivansh also made an effort to do away with such special treatment altogether. He formally raised this demand through a letter, a copy of which was also sent to the Hon'ble Vice President of India (Chairman of the Rajya Sabha). Meanwhile, in the annual admission process under this quota, he ensured that only the truly deserving benefited. The children admitted through Harivansh's recommendations came from diverse backgrounds, categories, and regions.

But Harivansh went a step further. In the third year of his tenure, in 2017, he wrote to the then Union Human Resource Development Minister, Prakash Javadekar, urging that the MPs' admission quota in Kendriya Vidyalayas be abolished altogether. In his letter dated 17 July 2017, he formally requested the Minister to end this preferential provision and the government subsequently did away with the quota.

17 July 2017

Prakash Javadekar
Minister for Human Resource Development
Government of India, New Delhi

Subject: Request to abolish the MPs' admission quota in KendriyaVidyalayas

Respected Javadekar ji,

I have been a Member of the Rajya Sabha for the past three years, and I am writing this letter based on personal experience. Earlier, every Member of Parliament was permitted to recommend five students for admission to Kendriya Vidyalayas. Subsequently, under your government, this number was increased to ten.

My humble request is that the number of KendriyaVidyalayas—or other quality government schools—be expanded to such an extent that parents and students do not have to approach MPs for admissions at all. In the past, facilities such as telephones, gas connections, and scooters were also allotted under MPs' quotas. Today, these services are widely accessible, and no one has to make special efforts to obtain them.

In the same spirit, I submit that by increasing classroom capacity in existing schools or by establishing new schools, we should create a system where no parent or student is forced to run from pillar to post for admission, or approach any MP or politician. Quality education is a fundamental right.

With this in mind, I earnestly request that the provision of admissions under the MPs' quota in Kendriya Vidyalayas be abolished immediately. At the same time, the government should ensure a mechanism whereby no student or parent faces difficulty in securing admission.

Fundamentally, Members of Parliament should not enjoy such special privileges—whether for admissions or other favours. This is essential for making politics cleaner and more credible. I trust you will take meaningful steps in this direction.

With regards,

Harivansh

Linking Two Legacies : From Sanyasi Village to JP's Village

Harivansh became a Member of Parliament in 2014. That same year, the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a new initiative—the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana—on the birth anniversary of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan.

It was Harivansh's first year in Parliament. He himself belongs to Sitab Diara, the native village of Jayaprakash Narayan. Yet, he consciously decided not to adopt his own village. Instead, he chose a village of historical significance with which he had no personal connection.

During his years in journalism, Harivansh had come across the life and work of Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi. He revisited those readings, traced Sannyasi's roots, and eventually selected Tenduni Bahuara village—located in the Sasaram parliamentary constituency (a reserved Lok Sabha seat), in Karhagar block of Rohtas district, Bihar. Tenduni Bahuara is the native village of Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi.

This choice reflected a deliberate departure from familiarity—anchoring development not in personal ties, but in historical legacy and social responsibility.

Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi was a renowned freedom fighter and a leading voice of the Indian diaspora in South Africa during the struggle for Independence. He was deeply admired by Mahatma Gandhi. His father, Jayaram Singh, was also closely associated with Gandhi—so much so that Gandhi mentions him in his autobiography.

During his visits to India, Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi undertook significant initiatives for education and social development in his native village, Tenduni Bahuara. Yet, after Independence, the village gradually slipped into neglect.

When Harivansh adopted Tenduni Bahuara, he began by commissioning a comprehensive survey of the entire region through the reputed organisation Swaniti, to prepare a structured development roadmap. Based on this report, he wrote to concerned departments for implementation of various schemes.

With support from the Union Ministry of Social Justice, a special camp for persons with disabilities was organised in the village, where assistive devices were distributed. As this coincided with the COVID period, Harivansh could not attend in person but interacted with villagers through online platforms.

An Anganwadi centre was constructed in the village. A proposal was sent for setting up a bank customer service centre. Simultaneously, correspondence with the District Magistrate led to identification and measurement of land for a school building. While the groundwork has been completed, construction of the school is still pending.

Harivansh shares a living, organic bond with his village and the surrounding region. Every two or three months, he makes it a point to visit his village and constituency. Whenever he is in the area, people repeatedly draw his attention to the Diara belt—how it has remained backward since the days of JP, and how the kind of development it deserved never truly reached it.

Being a son of the soil himself, Harivansh has not merely heard about these hardships; he has seen them up close and lived through them. The challenges of the Diara region are part of his own lived experience, shaping both his understanding and his sense of responsibility toward the area.

After this, Harivansh focused on the work for the development of JP's village, Sitab Diara. The village lies on the Bihar–Uttar Pradesh border and comprises 27 hamlets spread across three districts—Saran, Ballia, and Bhojpur.

This was where Jayaprakash Narayan lived. He remembers, former Prime Minister Chandrashekhar had established a trust and completed several development works. During JP's lifetime, villagers often told him, "At your word, work gets done across the country, but you do nothing for your own village." JP would reply that every village in India mattered equally to him. Yet, in his final days, he asked Chandrashekhar ji look after his village. Chandrashekhar responded by setting up the trust and initiating multiple projects.

Even so, this Diara-region village remained backward on several counts. To address this, Harivansh began efforts at his own level. JP-linked trusts exist in both Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Harivansh invited an expert team from Pune-based CEGP to conduct a comprehensive survey of the region. Under the leadership of Vignesh Mule, a social and economic development roadmap was prepared. The team spent fifteen days in the area, interacting with residents and compiling a detailed report, which then became the basis for further action.

JP had wished for a hospital in the village in the name of his wife, Prabhavati Devi. The existing a small two-bed facility was grossly inadequate. Through Harivansh's initiative and with the support of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a 102-bed hospital was constructed. Similarly on the Bihar side of Sitab Diara, roads, access to electricity, construction of a hospital, and a pontoons bridge has been developed by the Bihar government.

The village also lacked a Panchayat Secretariat. Harivansh donated private land for the Panchayat building, which is now fully functional.

In this manner, Harivansh continues to carry forward the shared vision of JP and Chandrashekhar—working steadily to translate their dreams for Sitab Diara into lived reality.

Sitab Diara:
Between Two Rivers and One Lost World

- Harivansh

Sitab Diara is the village where I was born. As I began to understand the world around me, I learnt that the village has as many as 27 hamlets. It lies cradled between two rivers—the Ganga to the south and the Ghaghara River (also known as the Sarayu) to the north.

By the time I reached Class Four, I discovered something even more remarkable: this single village stretches across two states and three districts — Ballia in Uttar Pradesh, and Saran (Chhapra) and Bhojpur (Ara) in Bihar. It is a Diara region, shaped by rivers and seasons alike.

As children, we waited eagerly for the floods every year. For three to four months, the village would remain surrounded — or submerged — by floodwaters. Children looked forward to it because floods meant school holidays. It brought long hours of swimming in the river, jumping into the water, catching fish, and rides on small boats—called dengi in Hindi—as we visited one home after another. Thus, the floods brought lot of fun to children and it was calamity for the villagers – a constant struggle between survival and loss.

By July, word would spread that the river levels were rising. Worry would appear on the faces of farmers, elders, and men and women alike. We children, meanwhile, would run in groups to the riverbanks—eager to see how much the water had risen, how fast it was advancing, and how long it might take to reach our homes.

July also meant the lush greenness of Saawan. Heavy rains would often make rooftops leak. If the floods were mild, some kharif crops would survive — *arahar, masuri, jowar*. Tall reeds would spring up in abundance. To protect the fields from wandering animals — nilgai, jackals, and stray cattle—watch platforms were built. Day and night, people guarded their crops. Meals were carried from home to those keeping vigil in the fields.

I still remember the vivid colours of Saawan's greenery in the villages—arriving after months of scorching heat, dust storms, and punishing summer winds. With the new season came a change of class in school, new textbooks, and fresh beginnings.

There were disputes too—over fields or other matters — and at times the atmosphere would turn tense. But village elders still commanded respect. The *panchas* held authority, and seniors would step in first, trying to resolve conflicts before they deepened.

It was a world shaped by rivers and seasons, hardship and hope—where childhood joy coexisted quietly with adult anxieties.

The nearest railway station to our village was nearly fifteen kilometres away. Reaching it meant walking ten to twelve kilometres and then crossing the river. During flood season, this journey could take an entire day.

From home, the boat journey alone stretched to eighteen or twenty kilometres. There was always the lurking fear of capsizing. Whenever the rivers changed their course, erosion followed—homes collapsed, entire hamlets vanished. Those affected would uproot themselves and settle elsewhere, starting life all over again.

One lasting impact of these floods was that the village could manage only a single crop each year—the rabi crop. For the rest of the time, fields remained submerged. Such was the geography of the place that a person's house might stand in one district or even one state, while his farmland lay in another. Someone could live on the Uttar Pradesh side, cultivate part of his land in Chhapra, Bihar, and another portion in Ara—three districts, two states, one fragile livelihood.

Life in the Diara was shaped by water, uncertainty, and resilience—where borders blurred, seasons ruled, and survival itself was a daily act of negotiation with the rivers.

When I entered Class Five, I began to realise that the most renowned person from our village was Jayaprakash Narayan—JP. His home stood very close to ours.

Two village occasions from childhood remain vividly etched in my memory. Both were centres of excitement for us children: 12 February and 11 October. The 11th of October marked JP's birthday, while 12 February was observed as Mahatma Gandhi's Memorial Day.

JP had donated part of his own land, adjoining his home, for the Sarvodaya Ashram and the Gandhi Khadi Bhandar. It was inaugurated by Vinoba Bhave, who had walked all the way to the Diara. These grounds became the venue for the annual gatherings. On 11 October, villagers celebrated JP's birthday. For us children, it was a day of joy, though our understanding was still limited.

By Class Five, the meaning of 12 February became clearer. Our modest primary school teacher announced that children would deliver speeches and assigned me one on Gandhi. He wrote it out for me, made me memorise it, and rehearsed it with me. Other students were preparing for different programmes. I still remember wearing a *khadi* cap and a Gandhi *kurta*, stepping nervously up to the microphone, and delivering my very first speech—trembling all the while. The warmth and encouragement I received from village elders that day still stays with me.

This observance had been initiated by JP. After Gandhi's passing, JP organised a fair on the thirteenth day, following Hindu custom, so that people would remember Gandhi—thus beginning a tradition of marking the shraddh day as Gandhi Memorial Day. The larger purpose was to reflect on gram swaraj, recognise village autonomy, and understand decentralisation.

Many Sarvoday leaders would also come. Conversations around spinning, farming, and swadeshi filled the air. Men and women alike worked the charkha. Yarn was sold. The Khadi Ashram functioned from a small space, and there was a modest khadi shop as well.

Those gatherings were not just festivals—they were lessons in simplicity, self-reliance, and collective living, quietly shaping our early understanding of public life and shared responsibility.

Our family, along with villagers, donated land to build a high school in JP's name. After primary school, I joined that institution in Class Six. Most people in the village were illiterate. There was little wealth. Fields were all they had, farmed in traditional ways. Because of floods, only one crop was possible each year. When the floods were kind, they left behind fertile soil, yielding just enough grain for the families.

There were caste divisions, yet the warmth and mutual affection among people was remarkable. I often heard stories of youngsters who, after completing their IA or BA, secured police jobs—only to resign and return to the village, drawn back by its way of life.

There were no proper roads. No electricity, no transport facilities, none of the comforts we now call modern. And yet, human relationships were richer—more intimate, rooted in empathy. It was the era of joint families. Elders held a special place, their presence guiding everyday life.

Material scarcity was real. But emotional abundance made up for much of it. Life moved slowly, held together by shared labour, collective memory, and bonds that ran deeper than convenience.

Discussions on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were common, as was the singing of the Ramayana. Harikirtan gatherings brought people together. Many villagers were illiterate, yet large portions of the Ramcharitmanas lived in their memory. Performances inspired by Bhikhari Thakur were immensely popular.

Farming was central to life, and livestock was deeply valued. Our early lessons in kindness toward animals were learnt at home. Cattle were cared for with affection and diligence. Cows provided milk; bullocks tilled the fields; buffaloes gave milk; some families kept horses for travel across the sandy Diara stretches. The tradition of keeping elephants was fading, but its memory still lingered.

Village conversations ranged widely—local problems, everyday hardships, personal disputes, court cases, wandering ascetics, agriculture, and eventually politics. Arguments could be sharp, yet on death or marriage, even long-standing rivals would stand together in support. In conflicts with outsiders, the honour of one person was seen as the honour of the entire village.

Saints and ascetics were held in deep respect. They were not like many seen today. Most would seek alms from a single household in the evening and move on, staying overnight only when strongly urged. People often said: a wandering yogi is like flowing water.

We saw Gorakhpanthi and Nath yogis in the village. Their singing could bring tears to the eyes—especially among women, who often felt overwhelmed by the emotion of it. Rarely would they stay more than a night in one place.

Once, a renunciate baba arrived—a remarkable saint. A householder-saint uncle of mine took him to a secluded spot by the Sarayu River. He stayed there alone through the night. Memories of that spiritually awakened ascetic still remain vivid.

Deceit, lies, and manipulation were generally looked upon with deep disdain. Life was simple, values were direct, and though material comforts were scarce, the moral compass of the community was quietly firm.

Slowly, politics began to make its presence felt. The Indian National Congress party then held sway. The Socialist Party was active too, and in some places, voices from the Left could also be heard. Elections to Lok Sabha and Assemblies were held together in those days. A few years later, frequent polls became the norm. Soon, conversations shifted to development schemes, contracts, and whispers of corruption began floating in the air.

Whenever I look back at that village life, I realise that whatever good values I absorbed came from that soil, that atmosphere, and those elders. The seniors in our household who managed farming—Bhikhari bhai, Ustad Baba, and others—were in truth our guardians. We never cared to know which caste they belonged to. If we returned late after play or failed to sit down to study by lantern light in the evening, we knew a scolding awaited us—and they would complain to our father the moment he came home. This was not just my story. Any elder in the village could correct any child who went astray.

In peak winter, people gathered around fires—called *alav* or *kaura* — fuelled by cow-dung cakes and firewood. This became the village's most vibrant living room: under the open sky, where household concerns, village problems, and occasionally state or national politics were discussed. Only a few homes had radios. Newspapers did not reach us. These fireside gatherings were like miniature village assemblies.

Many things I heard there as a child remain etched in memory forever. From that largely illiterate society, I learnt what Indian traditions truly meant. Much later, I read about the ancient Licchavi village republics—but what I had lived was much the same: a village code of conduct, mutual trust among elders, and above all, an unwritten agreement on the values that held society together. It was a moral order.

Every home had a *do-chaara* — also called *madayi*, *palani*, or *baithaka* — a space where people gathered on ordinary days. It was the village equivalent of a public drawing room. Elsewhere, there might be a raised platform under a tree, or during harvest season, the threshing ground. In their spare time, men and elders would sit together in these spaces, sharing joys and sorrows, speaking of dreams and difficulties.

Village life was collective. Loneliness or individual despair was rare. Shared hardship lay at the heart of rural living — a quiet sense of togetherness that defined *ganvai jeevan* (rustic rural life), where life was less about the self and more about

the community.

It was not that everything was ideal. Many incidents occurred. Yet, rarely would anyone defend what was wrong. Those who rose through unethical means or sudden wealth were not granted social respect or acceptance. Poverty was stark. Medical care was almost a dream. There was no electricity, no assured water supply, and no proper system of education.

Travel was equally difficult. There were only a few ways in and out of the village. From the Bihar side, one had to cross the Ghaghara River near Revelganj and then walk eight to ten kilometres. From the Ara side, one crossed the Ganga and covered an even longer distance on foot. From Uttar Pradesh, people would get down at the nearest railway station and walk nearly twenty kilometres.

Most villagers approached from the Bihar side, using these two river ghats. The boatmen and the ghat watchmen knew every household across all twenty-seven hamlets — because they themselves came from those very settlements. They met each other every morning, and these two waterways made travel to Chhapra and Ara relatively easier. Ballia lay much farther away.

Today, this single village forms part of the electoral constituencies of three Members of Parliament and three Members of Legislative Assembly across Bihar and Uttar Pradesh — a quiet reminder of how geography, history, and politics intersect in this river-bound land.

But slowly, a different kind of flood swept through the village — one of social change. The story was the same in every household. Relationships began to be shaped by self-interest. Joint families became a thing of the past. Each person now lives in a separate world.

Earlier, villages had family patriarchs—custodians who carried responsibility for everyone. They often cared more for others than for their own children. A father's place in the household was unquestioned. Today, when I look at the same village, fathers still make decisions, but sons no longer listen.

Even villages are now absorbed in mobile phones and WhatsApp. The world has changed. Respect for labour has faded. The desire is for easy access to everything. The dream is to earn crores without effort, sitting at home. This is the aspiration shaping the new generation.

Black-tar roads have reached the village—once unimaginable. Schools have been built. Villages electrified. I first saw it when I was thirteen or fourteen, though it was never regular. A telephone line had come earlier, thanks to Jayaprakash ji. Most importantly, the crushing poverty of earlier days is no longer there. Nor do devastating floods arrive every year.

Yet the village that gave our generation rare values — empathy, mutual harmony, dignity, respect for elders, reverence for women—no longer feels the same. Those qualities now live only in memory. They tug at me again and again, drawing me back to the village.

I visit often, but the people of that time remain only in remembrance. It is not just a generation that has gone; with it disappeared the deep, intimate relationships that once defined village life. Today, even one's own soil feels unfamiliar.

Much later, while editing a newspaper, I published two essays by Bihar's former Finance Minister and gifted leader Prabhunath Singh—one titled "*Kahan Gayil Mor Gaon Re*" (Where has my village gone?), and another deeply personal memoir centred on his mother. Both pieces still linger painfully in my mind.

Harivansh interacting with villagers of Sitab Diara during one of his visits

They spoke of how even ageing parents have begun to feel like outsiders in their own villages; how elders—once the most respected figures in rural life—are now pushed into quiet loneliness. It was a stark reminder of how dignity in old age has eroded.

There was a time when money was not Almighty in our villages. Today, that truth has almost been forgotten.

In much the same way, two things I heard from village elders about Jayaprakash Narayan later helped me understand the deeper currents of politics.

JP had already become a national figure, yet he returned to the village often. Entire hamlets would gather at his home; everyone came to meet him, and he met everyone in turn. The village was his soft corner. He always spoke in Bhojpuri, his own tongue.

Once, villagers approached him with hesitation, saying they had two problems they wished to place before him. JP simply replied, "Tell me freely."

They said: our village is one, yet it is divided across two states and three districts. Erosion is our fate. If our homes are in Ballia, our fields lie in Bihar—sometimes in Ara, sometimes in Saran. If the house is in Bihar, the fields and threshing grounds may be just a short distance away in Uttar Pradesh. Even within Bihar, land and homes fall under different districts. In this way, village life and development are controlled by three district administrations.

They pleaded that if he could intervene, the entire village might come under one state and one district, it would bring immense relief. Around that time, the government had constituted the Triveni Commission to address problems along the Uttar Pradesh – Bihar border, especially administrative difficulties.

For the villagers, Chhapra was the nearest district headquarters, followed by Ara. Even when the distances to both were added together, Ballia was still farther away. It would have been far more practical, they said, if the whole village were included in Chhapra district. "Please help bring us under one province and one district."

Then they raised their second concern. There were no roads, no electricity, no school. Access to the village was so difficult that outsiders avoided coming altogether. During floods, life became that of an island surrounded by water — almost hellish. People survived at the mercy of fate. If even a few basic development works could be taken up, they said, it would bring enormous relief.

It was a simple plea — for administrative unity, basic infrastructure, and dignity in daily life—spoken quietly by people long accustomed to hardship.

Village elders recalled that JP listened patiently to both concerns. With courtesy and composure, he said:

"You are all right—and there are elders present here who understand this. Let me tell you: this country has nearly six lakh villages. Independence is still new. Every village has its own problems. If I intervene somewhere and get work done for my own village, people across the country will say that JP is getting things done for his village. We fought the freedom struggle believing the entire nation was ours — six lakh villages are ours. If today I speak only for my own village, what will people say?"

The elders understood instantly. They replied, "Please do not do that. Your moral restraint and your larger vision for the country make us feel proud."

I first heard this episode from village elders. Only later did I fully grasp what it revealed — how deeply dignity, ethical conduct, and public propriety once shaped everyday political behaviour.

Much later, I came across this reflection by Mahatma Gandhi:

People do not like to hear anything said against themselves, and therefore fail to realise that what they call the progress of civilisation is, in truth, a disease. Gandhi wrote that humanity has come to treat material gains and bodily comforts with real achievements.

He observed that Europeans now live in better houses than they did a hundred years ago—and this is called civilisation. Earlier, people wore leather garments and used spears; today they wear long trousers and replace spears with guns that can fire five bullets at once—this too is hailed as civilisation. Once, land was tilled with simple ploughs through hard labour; now steam-powered machines allow one man to cultivate vast stretches of land and earn enormous money—again, civilisation.

Earlier, people travelled twelve miles by bullock cart; now trains carry them four hundred miles—this is praised as progress. Then came the dream of aeroplanes, promising that one could reach any corner of the world in a few hours. No need to move hands or feet: press one button and clothes appear; press another and the newspaper arrives; press a third and the car is ready. Food will always be available. Human limbs will no longer work—machines will do everything.

Today, a single shell - can kill thousands—this too is counted as civilisation.

Earlier, people worked freely in the open air, according to their strength. Now thousands are packed into factories and mines, their condition worse than animals. Once, people were enslaved by force; now they are enslaved through money and pleasure. Diseases that did not exist before have been created; doctors now search for cures. Hospitals multiply—and this too is celebrated as civilisation.

And yet, Gandhi ji noted in all these experiences of so-called civilisation, there was scarcely any place for ethics or spirituality.

Mahatma Gandhi ji made it clear that any invention achieved without ethical grounding ultimately gives birth to crisis. Society is already enslaved by its own desires; in such a climate, our systems and markets exploit this weakness to the fullest.

What Gandhi ji described as civilisation, we today casually call development. The relentless exploitation of the earth for

profit and greed — the abuse of rivers, mountains, glaciers, and soil — has pushed both the planet and human society toward an existential brink.

Gandhi ji had also issued a stark warning: this civilisation is such that, if we merely sit back and remain passive, those caught in its grip will eventually perish in the very fire they themselves have lit.

Now, with my frequent visits back to the village, I can see that the crushing poverty of earlier days is no more visible, and modernity has knocked even on that remote doorstep. But the question lingers — is this what true progress really means?

Once, I said to Chandrashekhar ji that most politicians today seem absorbed in developing only their own parliamentary or Assembly constituencies. JP's village had been left behind, though he had ensured some work was done there.

He replied thoughtfully: "Look how many Prime Ministers and major leaders came from Uttar Pradesh. Leaving recent times aside, Jawaharlal Nehru led the country for a long period. After him came Lal Bahadur Shastri, and then Indira Gandhi. All were towering figures in our history. Would it have been right for such leaders to focus only on their own state or constituency? If they had, who would have carried the vision of the nation as a whole?

"That path would set a dangerous precedent — that for leaders, the country begins and ends with their own region. Remember how villages function in joint families: the father often looks after his nephews and relatives before attending to his own children. Other elders then care for the head of the family's children. In this way, the entire family rises together."

It was his way of explaining leadership — not as attachment to one's own corner, but as responsibility for the larger collective.

It made me realise that their way of thinking was simple: first work for the good of others, and only then turn to oneself.

I am reminded of my father. From childhood, the image I carried of him was one of seriousness and quiet resolve—an extraordinary dedication to work and family. He was often away, tending to farming, court matters, or family responsibilities like weddings. At sixteen, he lost his own father prematurely and had to shoulder the entire burden of the household. He arranged his sisters' marriages, looked after nieces and nephews, and later coped with the untimely death of his elder brother. Income was limited, yet responsibility was immense.

Our communication with him was sparse. We feared him more than we spoke to him. It was my uncle—whom we called Lala—who showered us with affection. But my father was deeply conscious of discipline, upbringing, and education. He watched our lifestyle closely. We lived in a modest house of mud, thatch, or raw bricks, but cleanliness was impeccable.

Every single paisa was accounted for. He maintained daily expense diaries, ledger books, and annual records—how much was spent where, every detail meticulously noted. Even today, those handwritten annual accounts remain—decades of household expenses, recorded penny by penny. In his younger days, he worked relentlessly to reclaim fields that had been mortgaged due to debt. He later served as *Mukhiya* (Panchayat Head) as well.

My mother remains in memory as gentle, nurturing, and deeply spiritual. No one ever left our home without being fed. From four in the morning, she would cook for dozens on a mud stove, smoke filling the kitchen. Around eleven or noon she would bathe and perform her prayers. Fifteen to twenty days each month were spent fasting. During Kartik, she would wake at four every morning for cold-water baths, lighting a lamp beneath the amla tree.

Once, she travelled by bus to Gangasagar with twenty-five or thirty village women. I often recall seeing such buses halt briefly at Victoria Maidan in Kolkata — people sleeping on the ground, cooking, eating, using makeshift facilities. I was in Kolkata at the time she passed through, stopping at Victoria Maidan after visiting Gangasagar. The journey was full of hardship. Yet neither she knew I was nearby, nor did I know she was passing through.

Her life was marked by generosity, charity, and extra-ordinary patience. These qualities gave her a quiet dignity. She came from a comparatively well-off family and had brought jewellery with her, but handed everything over to my father to meet household needs. No one ever heard her raise her voice. In neighbouring homes and across the village, she had a special place of respect. Her kindness left a lasting imprint on everyone around her.

They were ordinary people, living in difficult circumstances — but their lives were rich in values, restraint, and compassion. Those lessons, more than anything else, shaped who we became.

I saw the same spirit embodied in JP's personal secretary, Jagdish Babu. When we were children, we assumed he belonged to JP's household. As we grew older, we learnt that he actually came from Govindchak near Sonpur, nearly fifty kilometres away, from a well-settled farming family.

He was a serious, quietly dignified man, held in great regard. As I grew up, I began to receive his affection too. He never remarried. He never built a family of his own. As a student, he had been drawn to the socialist movement, and he remained devoted to its ideals throughout his life. He set out with JP to help build a new society, went to jail many times, and endured countless hardships.

In 1942, when JP escaped from Hazaribagh jail, Jagdish Babu slept in JP's bed to mislead the authorities. After Independence, he did not turn toward power politics. JP kept him close—in today's language, as his personal secretary. They worked together for over five decades. He was the caretaker of JP's household, the quiet organiser behind everything—managing the home, the fields, and the village ashram. In village terms, he was the sarvesarva, (All-in-all) the one who ensured everything functioned.

Later, when I began to learn more about his personal life, I realised that almost all the towering socialist leaders knew him intimately—he had been their companion in struggle. Among his close friends was Karpoori Thakur. He had participated in early socialist study camps in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s.

A Journey to My Village : Then and Now

May 2025. During the first week of May, I was in my village, Sitab Diara. One evening, on May 1, I suddenly received a message from Parliament: to reach Delhi on May 2. A Japanese parliamentary delegation was arriving to meet the Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha and members of the Indian parliamentary delegation.

My immediate response was that I was in my village, historically,a difficult place to access. I told them that I might not be able to reach Delhi the next morning, even if I tried. It was my instinctive reaction that came from my own experience in the village as it was before 2014 — the realities I had grown up with as a child and teenager.

After a moment's reflection, I realized that the things have changed now specially those old experiences no longer defined after 2014, this journey was indeed possible.

From the same village that once required three to four days to reach Delhi, I could now leave in the early morning and be in Delhi by 10 a.m. — in barely five hours. Leaving at dawn, I could cross the river Ganga over a pontoon bridge and reach Patna in about two and a half hours. From there, I could catch a morning flight to Delhi — and even return to the village the same evening.

For someone born in a place where mobility once meant hardship and uncertainty, the thought of going to Delhi and returning the same day would once have seemed unimaginable. While such transformations may have occurred elsewhere in the world earlier, in India this became possible mainly after 2014, with what can only be described as an infrastructure revolution — the "death of distance."

Though this was possible only for six months a year, till the time the pontoon bridge operates over the Ganga. I informed Delhi that I will come.

At 4:30 a.m., I left home. The district administration had sent a vehicle. Crossing the pontoon bridge, I reached Patna by 7:00 a.m. I boarded an IndiGo flight at 8:30 a.m. and landed in Delhi by 10:15 a.m. After briefly freshening up at my official residence, I went to Parliament. Under the leadership of the Hon'ble Speaker, Shri Om Birla, we met the Japanese parliamentary delegation. Later, I attended a luncheon hosted by the Speaker.

From there, I went straight to the airport and boarded a 4:05 p.m. flight to Patna; landed at 5:45 p.m., and after a brief halt along the way, reached my village by around 9:00 p.m.

In view of my previous experiences, this was nothing short of miraculous.

Throughout the journey, one memory lingered: how long it used to take to travel from this very village to Patna — let alone Delhi.In my childhood, the idea of a road was almost inconceivable.

Sitab Diara is a riverine tract to the north flows the Sarayu (Ghaghara); to the south, the Ganga. Travel meant walking 10–15 kilometers, then crossing miles of sand to reach the riverbank. Both rivers had to be crossed. We would take boats to reach the nearest railway station.

During floods, we would take boats directly from our homes and river crossings could take seven or eight hours — sometimes longer. The journey was perilous, dependent entirely on the winds and currents.

After crossing the Ghaghara, we would reach a small-gauge railway station at Revelganj, near Chhapra. In those days, one might leave home in the morning and reach Revelganj by evening. From there, we would proceed to Chhapra — sometimes by the one or two daily trains, if not by the horse carts (tam-tams).

From Chhapra, to reach Patna, one would go to Sonepur, then to Pahleja Ghat, and cross the Ganga by steamer to Patna. During floods, reaching Patna could take two to two-and-a-half days. Even in normal conditions, it required at least a day and a half or two days.

From Patna, one would board a train to Delhi — usually in unreserved compartments. Getting reserve seats was rare and unaffordable to most villagers. The train journey itself took two days. In total, reaching Delhi from our village required three to four days.And yet, on May 1, 2025, I left my village in the morning, attended meetings in Delhi, and returned home by night.

Even today, if the pontoon bridge is unavailable, one can leave the village at 4 p.m., reach Ara by 6 p.m., board a train like the Sampoorna Kranti Express, reach Delhi the next day, work there, and return by the same route. Such mobility would have been beyond imagination in my childhood.

Until 2005, even reaching Ara via the Ganga was difficult and dangerous. The current was strong and unpredictable. Most villagers preferred crossing the Ghaghara.

Efforts to connect the Sitab Diara village by road began in 1995–96 under former Prime Minister Chandrashekharji. Sitab Diara is the birthplace of Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan. His ancestral house, which houses a Trust, established by Chandrashekhar ji, stands barely a kilometer from my home.

The bridge over the Sarayu connecting Uttar Pradesh and Bihar — first proposed decades earlier — took 26 years to materialize, finally becoming operational around 2005.

The old British-era rail bridge at Manjhi (built in 1856) connected Chhapra and Ballia. Damaged in the 1933–34 earthquake, it was repaired and later converted to broad gauge. A new railway bridge is now under construction nearby.

During the period of the Janata Party government, in 1978, Jayaprakash Narayan came to his village to attend a function for the last time. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Ram Naresh Yadav ji, the Chief Minister of Bihar, Karpoori Thakur ji, several Union Ministers, and the President of the Janata Party, Chandrashekhar ji — all were present. At that time, in the Manjhi (Saryu River), the then Union Minister for Transport and Shipping, Chandram, laid the foundation stone for a link bridge between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This is the same area whose poverty was discussed in the Lok Sabha by Member of Parliament Vishwanath Singh Gahmari.

To decide the land demarcation in the Sitab Diara region, Prime Minister Pandit Nehru had constituted the Trivedi Commission. However, instead of a settlement based on land demarcation, the final decision was made on the basis of the flow of the rivers. As a result, Sitab Diara was divided between two states like separate islands. Most of the population feel themselves closer to Bihar. But to reach the district headquarters, villagers first had to complete a ten-kilometre journey on foot. During the rainy season, the villages became cut off. For several decades after Independence, there was extreme poverty. A parliamentary intervention by MP Vishwanath Singh Gahmari once described how people survived by picking undigested grains from cattle dung. Prime Minister Nehru reportedly had tears in his eyes hearing the account and immediately formed a committee (Patel Committee). But what happened to this committee or its report till today? No one knows. Similarly, after the foundation stone was laid in 1978, the central government forgot this project. Public movements and demonstrations with legitimate demands continued. Finally, due to the active intervention of Chandrashekhar, work began on it, but it took 27 years for the bridge to be completed in 2005.

At the same time, in the presence of Jayaprakash ji, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, Karpoori Thakur ji, announced that the Bihar government would construct a bridge over the Ganga from the Ara side (Sinha Ghat – Mahuli Ghat) to solve the problem of connectivity. This bridge, to be built from the Ganga side of this village, would be the lifeline. Through it, Patna, Banaras, etc., could be reached in a few hours, which earlier used to take almost two days. But this assurance of 1978 remains unfulfilled even after 48 years. In the infrastructure revolution taking place in the country after 2014, the people of JP's village hope that the construction of this bridge over the Ganga will also be completed.

Sitab Diara being a riverine island, one has to take a boat to reach the village. Harivansh during one of his visits to Sitab Diara in 2025

He possessed deep knowledge of global communism—its contradictions, the Soviet experiment, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and China's revolutionary path.

Yet he almost never spoke publicly about these matters. There was no display, no sense of superiority, no desire to stand out. Despite being JP's most trusted associate, he consciously remained in the background.

When I reflect on it now, the moral strength—the quiet ethical aura—he carried, and the impact it had on the village and on me personally, feels almost unbelievable. In those days, people like him were centres of inspiration in village life. They were our role models—living examples of commitment, humility, and principled courage.

Alongside him, Jagdish Babu also brought in Sarju Bhai to assist with agricultural work. Sarju Bhai hailed from a village near Chhapra. Ideologically a communist, he had been imprisoned with Rahul Sankrityayan and was one of his followers. He remained unmarried all his life and eventually came to manage JP's agricultural affairs—staying at JP's home till the very end.

He was highly skilled in farming techniques. Dressed in khadi trousers and a sleeveless vest, he would spend entire days working in the fields—using modern methods. JP even sent him to Israel to learn advanced agricultural practices. On returning to the village, Sarju Bhai transformed farming at JP's home. He installed the first tube well on JP's land and also set up the first biogas plant at JP's residence—both under his supervision.

Sarju Bhai worked under Jagdish Babu. But in temperament, the two were complete opposites. Where Jagdish Babu was quiet, restrained, and deeply serious, Sarju Bhai was outspoken—a revolutionary in both speech and conduct. The fire of communism always burned within him. Both were connected to communist party and associated with the great writer Rahul Sankrityayan. Jagdish Babu was kept in the Hazaribag prison in the same cell as JP. Since then he lived close to JP for the rest of his life.

Whenever JP visited the village, Sarju Bhai would sometimes put up handwritten posters near JP's house, declaring that certain people around him were exploiters, that they were wrong influences, and so on. JP and Jagdish Babu would see them. Visitors would see them too. Everyone would smile, instinctively recognising it for what it was—a communist's Gandhian, non-violent form of protest.

Meanwhile, Sarju Bhai remained unconcerned with reactions, immersed entirely in his work—unyielding, principled, and quietly relentless in his own way.

In the same spirit was our Chandrika Chacha—a devoted Sarvodaya worker and an unwavering follower of Jayaprakash Narayan. No guest ever left the village without being properly received and cared for.

Then there was Rasbihari Bhai. He would rise at four in the morning and appear at someone's doorstep—checking whether a child was studying, whether a household was facing trouble, or whether a dispute or misfortune had struck somewhere. If sowing had been delayed, if fodder for cattle was scarce, if someone had fallen ill, if there was a marriage to be arranged or a quarrel to be resolved—he seemed to carry a living register of every home's concerns. More importantly, he always had an idea of how help could be arranged.

Tall and brisk in his walk, wearing a Gandhian cap, he became the village sarpanch and remained so for life—not by electioneering, but by trust.

And then there was our Ustad Baba. In the Diara, when the currents of the Ganga and the Ghaghara River swallowed fields or entire hamlets through erosion, it could take twenty-five or even fifty years for that land to re-emerge — if it ever did. But when new Diara land surfaced, farming there often required staying overnight in lonely, desolate stretches.

Ustad Baba lived in those wildernesses. He was a master farmer, with an extraordinary instinct for reading Diara soil. He always thought first of others' welfare. Never spoke lightly or meanly. His life was guided by quiet competence and an unshakeable commitment to doing good.

People like them were the village's moral backbone — unassuming, tireless, and deeply rooted in service.

Then there was Sama Baba—illiterate, yet a gifted singer. He played the harmonium and, in the evenings, would sing, call out melodies, or drift into long alaaps in beautifully rendered ragas. Along with his elder brother Bahoran Baba, he also smoked ganja. Both brothers were renowned wrestlers, skilled with the lathi.

There was Ramkeval too—often their companion during those evening ganja sessions. When the intoxication rose, quarrels would break out, sometimes even leading to imaginary "property divisions" while sitting together. The next morning Ramkeval would ask, "So what happened to the partition?" The brothers would laugh angrily— "Are you foolish? Do brothers divide property while alive? That was only a drunken settlement."

They had earned much through hard work, especially in Kolkata. True to their own rhythm and joy, they loved ghost stories, were generous hosts, and had memorised large portions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, along with Chaita and Phagua folk songs. Without any formal training, Sama Baba mastered the harmonium and possessed deep knowledge of folk music. He was also remarkably adept at legal battles. In fights over honour and pride, he lost what would today amount to hundreds of crores—mostly property acquired in Kolkata. Yet there was no regret. He remained just as simple, warm, and kind. There was no deceit in him.

Another uncle, Binda Singh, had studied at TNB College in Bhagalpur in the 1950s. Many of his peers went on to become police officers and even DGPs. He too joined service—but soon left and returned to the village. Farming and devotion to God became his life. Welcoming saints and holding satsangs formed his daily routine. His greatest affection was reserved for his nephews.

He introduced me first to Nesfield's English Grammar. No one was allowed to wander around the house in a lungi, and returning home on time in the evening was mandatory. Lighting the lantern, visiting the Mahavir shrine, and sitting down to study was a fixed ritual. Though the family had

formally divided, Lala remained the guardian at every doorway. He would rise early, between four and five, singing bhajans of Surdas. The Bhramar Geet I heard from him still echoes in my ears.

Even then, I began to understand—not fully, but enough—that life is not merely material accumulation. Desire has its limits.

At school too, there was an elderly Pandit ji. Every Tuesday morning, he would gather the children in the playground and recite verses from the Bhagavad Gita, followed by short discourses. We barely understood anything then. Mischievous boys would steal his Bakuli fruit; he would chase them angrily. Yet, through stories, he shared priceless wisdom from the Gita and ancient cultural traditions.

Looking back now, I realise these people—simple, flawed, generous, spiritually anchored—were our earliest teachers. They shaped our sense of limits, compassion, dignity, and belonging, long before we learnt such words.

There was also Takmano Aji. Widowed in childhood, she returned from her in-laws' home. The villagers built a small madai for her, and she lived there all her life—alone. The village looked after her. She had no family of her own, yet she could scold even the most respected elders, and no one ever answered back.

I often wonder how many such people came together to form my village—or whether villages across the country once shared the same temperament and values. They were part of a centuries-old flow of Indian rural culture, the very spirit that moved Maithili Sharan Gupt to say:

'अहा ग्राम्य जीवन भी क्या है,

क्यों न इसे सबका मन चाहे,

थोड़े में निर्वाह यहां है,

ऐसी सुविधा और कहां है '

(Ah, how beautiful village life is—
no wonder everyone longs for it.
Here, one can live well with very little;
where else does such ease exist?)

Mahatma Gandhi had seen village life from close quarters. His clear conclusion was that India's true progress lay in developing villages as self-reliant, autonomous units. Perhaps it was this enduring cultural continuity — this ancient rhythm of rural life — that moved Muhammad Iqbal to write:

यूनां, मिस्र, रोमा, सब मिट गए जहां से,

बाकी मगर है अब तक, नामो निशां हमारा

(Greece, Egypt, and Rome have all vanished from the world; yet our name and our traces still endure.)

That is why Mahatma Gandhi once said of villages, “How ancient our villages are, how ancient our culture is.” While Gandhi saw it as his duty to remove the shortcomings of rural life and make villages clean and beautiful, he also believed that there was much to learn from the villagers' simple, pure, and spiritually rooted way of living.

But even as we watched, modernity began entering in new forms. The Western idea of development started consuming—and contaminating—the soul of India's villages and their inherent strengths.

Often, I feel that in my childhood and student days, my village had no roads, no electricity, no basic facilities, and medical care was almost unimaginable. Communication was a distant dream. There were poverty and illiteracy. Today, many of these problems have been addressed to some extent. That crushing poverty is no longer there. Schools have come up everywhere. Children no longer have to study under neem trees or carry sacks and wooden planks to sit on.

Much has changed—but something precious has been lost. That sense of belonging. That warmth of relationships. That protective affection of elders. Now, the divide between “ours” and “others” knocks on every door. There is a race for material success. Money has become God. Caste identities are resurfacing. Progress has arrived—but at a quiet cost.

In my childhood, there were no markets in the village. Vendors would walk from hamlet to hamlet selling goods—mangoes, watermelons, muskmelons, and the like. People shared a warm, familiar bond with them. Utensil sellers—the thatheras—also travelled through the village, carrying brass, zinc, aluminium, and steel vessels, some-times on horseback, sometimes balanced on their heads.

Shoes were made locally. I still remember getting my first pair at the age of fourteen. The cobbler lived about three kilometres away. He took over a month to make them. I was a child—full of curiosity and excitement. The attraction of those shoes was irresistible. I would often ride over on a mare just to check on their progress. When they were finally ready, I brought them home myself, holding them in my hands while riding back. I don't remember the exact price—perhaps ten or twelve rupees.

Clothes were stitched only once or twice a year, usually around weddings or special occasions. For that, one had to travel to the town market — nearly fifteen to twenty kilometres away. The journey meant crossing the river by boat, then taking a tam-tam or train to Chhapra, and finally reaching the market on foot or by rickshaw.

Life moved slowly, deliberately. Every purchase carried a journey. Every object had a story. And every small possession felt earned—through time, effort, and anticipation.

When I look back today, those were modest markets — more like small town bazaars. Yet Chhapra and Ara were considered “cities” in our world. For weddings, funerals, community feasts, or religious gatherings, people would travel there by tyre-cart or boat to shop. Farming was central to life. Grain was harvested and then buried in the earth, covered with soil—what villagers called khad or bakhar. Some of it was stored in large earthen containers known as chhod.

Village life revolved around agricultural rhythms and festivals. Big fairs in nearby areas drew crowds; cattle were traded, and handmade goods were sold. After the monsoon, when ploughs returned to the fields following a brief rest, work began with prayers—locally called samahut. Holi arrived with colour and song. Groups moved from door to door with

drums and cymbals, singing phag—rich and poor alike were included. Then came Chaita. Nights echoed with folk songs accompanied by dhol and jhal. The Ramayana was recited. Hari kirtans were held. There were many festivals—perhaps to keep an agrarian society alive, bonded, and emotionally engaged through the year.

Weddings were collective affairs. Beds, stools, and cots were gathered from every household. The wedding procession stayed overnight. For a bride's marriage, the mando was decorated, and the village's young people participated with infectious enthusiasm. When someone died, the entire village assembled. Everyone stepped forward to help. In some homes, the Garuda Purana was recited. People remained at the bereaved family's doorstep until the final rites were completed, bringing cooked food from their own houses.

Village rituals—festivals, marriages, prayers, mourning — were not outsourced to "event managers." They were carried by the community itself.

That has changed now.

The village once moved as one body—sharing labour, sorrow, celebration, and faith. Today, much of that collective spirit has quietly slipped away.

Slowly, the passage of time altered even those long-held customs. Earlier, those who left the village would return after retirement. During summer vacations, families came back with children to spend time in their ancestral homes. Today, people leave the village for good. Talent has migrated outward. Farming no longer attracts the young; fields are seen as burdens. The focus now is on extracting maximum benefit from government schemes. The hunger to earn without labour has grown strong.

It was witnessing this decline and displacement that the noted writer and essayist Krishna Bihari Mishra wrote his memorable book *Behaya Ka Jungle* decades ago.

There was a time when Bhojpuri culture carried dignity — Kabir's nirgun verses, the haunting songs of Gorakhpanthi yogis, and the works of folk masters like Mahendra Mishra, Bhikhari Thakur, and Bhola Singh Gahmari. From this very region emerged towering figures such as Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Bhagwat Sharan Upadhyay, Amar Kant, Kedarnath Singh, and Doodhnath Singh.

The region also shaped Jayaprakash Narayan and Chandrashekhar.

Today, access to the village has multiplied. From Bihar, there is now a bridge over the Ghaghara River at Manjhi. From the south, one crosses the Ganga near Ara. From Ballia, roads now reach directly into the village.

But with connectivity has come unchecked crowds. Almost every household owns vehicles—two-wheelers and cars alike. There is fierce competition to become middlemen in government schemes. Politics has overtaken everything else. It now dominates relationships, social ties, and even caste equations. Politics colours everyday village interactions. There are disputes over every inch of land—within families and outside them.

The line between ethical and unethical is fading. Power, influence, and strength decide outcomes. Whoever wins is declared right. Compared to earlier times, the very standards by which life is measured have fundamentally changed.

Back then, worship was not about display. People prayed with quiet faith—without pomp or spectacle. Today, Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, and other festivals come with donation drives, loud celebrations, and alcohol consumption. Earlier, one went to the market only when there was a real need. Now, evenings are spent at roadside gatherings—tea in hand, often alcohol too—almost as a social ritual.

That old system had its hardships. There were struggles and uncertainties. People would take credit for the entire year and repay it after harvest. Weddings or illness meant falling into debt. Shopkeepers maintained handwritten ledgers. Everything was recorded with trust.

Now, countless mini-markets have sprung up in the village—locally called chatti. These stalls sell everything, including intoxicants. Alcohol is easily available.

Whenever I see this, a childhood memory returns. Around 1969–70, someone once brought toddy — fermented palm sap—in an earthen pot into the village from the northern side. By the next day, it had become the talk of all twenty-seven hamlets spread across three districts. For the elders, it was a moral alarm.

Sarvodaya worker Chandrika Singh sent word to the leading figures of every hamlet: *Where are we heading? What will become of our children, our society, our village?*

The man was summoned by elders from his own community. They questioned him, made him destroy the liquor, and warned him never to repeat it. Boatmen and ghat watchmen were alerted to ensure such things did not enter the Diara again.

Today, drinking crowds gather openly at village chattis. Alcohol is brewed locally. Very few homes remain untouched by this habit. People from Bihar now come into this riverine belt specifically to drink alcohol — because prohibition is strictly enforced in Bihar, while it remains freely available across the border in Uttar Pradesh. The impact is visible in Bihar's villages too.

What was once unthinkable has become routine.

And with it, something subtle yet vital has eroded — the collective moral restraint that once held village life together.

Earlier, the hardship lay in the market being far away. Today, the market has arrived at our doorstep—and with it, a different set of challenges. I visit the village often. Every time I pass these roadside chattis on my way back, I am left with a sense of emptiness and quiet sadness. We may have emerged from hardship and deprivation—but where exactly have we arrived?

Once, people hesitated to take loans. Now Charvak seems to rule: borrow from government banks and institutions, and don't repay—it will eventually be written off. This has become common belief.

The village where hunger for education grew did so not because of circumstance, but because of teachers. They were old-school educators—wearing dhoti and kurta—who did not agitate every year for increments or higher salaries, but found inner fulfilment in educating children. (Exceptions exist in every era—then and now.)

One teacher, in particular, remains vivid in my memory. He taught at my high school and lived nearby. He was not just a teacher; he was like a member of our family.

He never scolded. Never shouted. Never raised a stick. Instead, he inspired us to study and gently awakened our moral sense.

One small incident stays with me — it seemed ordinary then, but left a deep mark. Not far from our home stood a large dochara — in village terms, a common men's living space, almost like a shared drawing room. It was a big thatched hut where eight or ten people slept; in winter it was lined with straw, and often fifteen to twenty people would rest there together. Life was simple—quiet, rooted in nature, dependent on its rhythms.

Much later in life, I read Henry David Thoreau—how he left behind city life and material comforts to live beside a pond, relying almost entirely on nature, with minimal needs. Thoreau was a nineteenth-century thinker, often described as a transcendentalist, best known for his essay *Civil Disobedience*.

Mahatma Gandhi was deeply influenced by this American philosopher. Thoreau believed that conscience is the ultimate law of the world—that God has given human beings the power to act according to their inner moral compass. This very idea became the philosophical foundation of Gandhi's Satyagraha. Gandhi even described Thoreau's prayer as "the prayer of all prayers."

Looking back, I realise that the simplicity of those early days, the quiet guidance of teachers, and the natural rhythm of village life had already planted these same ideas within us—long before we encountered them in books.

O Lord, grant me the strength never to lose faith in myself because of my own actions.

May my hands never betray my resolve, and my faith never lose its dignity.

Let my love never fall short of the love my friends show me.

May my life always do more than my words can express.

And grant me the strength to absorb every sorrow in Your blessed creation —

so that this courage may always remain within me.

Henry David Thoreau was a philosopher deeply committed to natural moral principles. He was born in 1817 in Concord, Massachusetts, USA, and graduated from Harvard University.

He conducted many experiments in living. For a period, he chose to reside beside a pond, embracing an almost ascetic life—giving up meat, alcohol, and tobacco—seeking harmony with nature. He carefully documented the surrounding plants and wildlife, maintaining detailed records of natural life.

He captured these experiences in his book Walden, offering the world a new way of thinking about life. Thoreau stood for living with minimal needs, in rhythm with nature—a life of conscious simplicity. His enduring aspiration was clear: to live deliberately, close to nature, and with the least possible dependence on material comforts.

Today, the world speaks of minimalism—learning to live with fewer comforts. Rising consumption brings its own challenges: pressure on nature, environmental crises, polluted drinking water. The waste generated by consumer culture and a technology-driven world has become a new global problem.

And yet, the village of my childhood lived amid hardships — but people survived with the bare minimum, in quiet harmony with nature.

The baithaka or dochara—the common sleeping space for men—was made of dry grass and reeds. By eight in the evening, it felt like midnight. Dinner was usually taken early. That evening, I carried dinner from home for our teacher, Suresh Giri. Between the house and the dochara lay deep darkness—snakes and scorpions were always a fear. There might be just one torch in a household. Sharing was a way of life.

It was winter, and Giri ji was unwell. After he finished eating, I brought water in a brass pot. He asked gently, "Did you strain the water?"

I said yes.

The drinking water came from a well. I had lied—mostly because it was cold, dark, and I did not want to walk back again.

By then, a lantern had been arranged for studying. In its soft light, he looked into the pot. Inside was a tiny tadpole.

In those days, a lie could invite a beating with a stick. But Giri ji said nothing. He simply showed me the water and said, "You told me it was strained—look."

No lecture followed. No anger.

He only said, quietly, "Bring fresh water."

That moment stayed with me.

It taught me more about honesty, responsibility, and moral courage than any punishment ever could.

That small incident left a deep imprint on my adolescent mind. It taught me—quietly but firmly—how to avoid such moments in life. It was teachers like him who showed us the true meaning of education. They awakened the hunger to read, the desire to learn.

Giri ji also instilled a discipline in us. In the village, the usual routine was to eat by seven or eight in the evening and go straight to sleep. He introduced a new pattern—creating in us a psychological drive to study well and score better. His instruction was simple: eat early in the evening, sleep, then wake up around two or two-thirty at night and study until morning. For nearly two years, before the matriculation exams, he insisted we follow this routine.

I remember how difficult it was at first. Sitting on a chair, sleep would overpower me. Slowly, a habit formed. I would step outside for five or seven minutes, walk under the moonlit sky, then return to my books.

Nearly five decades have passed since then. The stillness of nature—the eloquent silence I felt in those hours—no longer feels the same. The beauty of the moon as I saw it then has never quite returned. In the dark nights of the Krishna Paksha, the stars spread across the sky, the outlines of garden trees ahead, the massive Pakar tree near the door, the tall Ashoka standing quietly—those images remain etched in memory.

It was only later that I read the poetry of Sumitranandan Pant, and realised that what he had written in verse, I had once lived in silence.

स्तब्ध ज्योत्सना में जब संसार
चकित रहता शिशु सा नादान ,
विश्व के पलकों पर सुकुमार
विचरते हैं जब स्वप्न अजान,
न जाने नक्षत्रों से कौन
निमंत्रण देता मुझको मौन !

(When the world stands still in silent moonlight, astonished
like an innocent child,
when delicate, unfamiliar dreams
wander softly across the eyelids of the universe —
I do not know which star
calls out to me, silently.)

In the biting cold of Paush and Magh, the cries of jackals and foxes once echoed through the nights—those sounds are no longer heard. The dew drops on wild grass used to shimmer like silver beads. During summer, there was a tradition of sleeping under the open sky in the village, and the joy of living beneath nature's own roof was something special—something rare today.

Neither my village retains even a trace of that life anymore, nor has this generation seen or lived it. The hunger to become one with nature was planted deep in my mind by the village itself.

Much later, I came across an episode from veteran Gandhian Kaka Kalelkar — and it felt like another quiet reminder of the same truth: that simplicity, closeness to nature, and inner discipline once shaped lives in ways we are only now beginning to rediscover.

He brought a Bhil child from Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh to Delhi, arranging everything—from schooling to daily care. Compared to village life, the child now had far greater material comforts.

After a few months, he noticed quiet sobbing in the night. Several people were sleeping on the terrace under the open sky—Kalelkar ji was there, and so was the boy. He called out to him and asked gently, "Why are you crying?"

At first, the child said nothing. After much coaxing, he finally began to answer.

Kaka sahib asked softly, "Are you having trouble with food? Is there any other discomfort? Do you need something? Is there any problem? Has something happened back home in the village—or has anything unpleasant occurred here in the city?"

His questions were not hurried. They carried concern, patience, and the instinct of someone who knew that sorrow often hides behind silence.

The boy said, "Nothing is wrong. Everything here is comfortable. I saw electricity for the first time. The food is very good. People are kind. I wear nice clothes. This is my first time living in a city. I have seen many things here for the first time in my life. I am living in comfort.

But I want my village.

I miss the silent night sky over the forests, those shining stars, that untouched beauty of the heavens. I miss the calves skipping around, the lowing of cows, the village's collective songs and dances. I miss everything.

I cannot stay here. Please send me back to my village—to my own surroundings."

Whenever that episode returns to my memory, it carries me back to my own village days—especially those late nights when I would wake up and look at the sky; that face of nature; those pitch-dark nights or glowing moonlit hours; the plants and trees I saw then; the cattle moving quietly; fields and threshing grounds stretching for miles; the lone well at our doorstep; the farming life; our animals—cows, buffaloes, oxen, the mare, calves, even our village dogs.

All of it comes rushing back.

I know that village no longer exists in the way it once did. Those people are gone. That environment has faded.

Even in the village, Pandit ji used to remind us during his lessons from the Bhagavad Gita that the real truth is ***kāl*** — ***time***. It flows endlessly. It is always in motion.

Charaiveti, charaiveti — keep moving, keep moving forward.

That, perhaps, is life's quiet law.

To understand this changed landscape—and the transformations my village has undergone (perhaps villages across the country as well)—I often return in memory to four novels I read nearly four decades ago: Aadha Gaon by Rahi Masoom Raza, Alag-Alag Vaitarni by Shiv Prasad Singh, Maila Aanchal by Phanishwar Nath Renu, and Raag Darbari by Shrilal Shukla.

There is ample sociological writing on how villages changed in post-Independence India and how values shifted. Yet these four classic works by Hindi novelists remain among the finest literary studies of rural society and family life in the 1960s and '70s. It is against this backdrop that I repeatedly try to understand my own village—turning back again and again across five decades of passing time.

Hardly any close relatives remain in the ancestral home now, yet I still go there several times a year. Back to that soil. The house still has only modest facilities—living is difficult, electricity remains uncertain. And yet the heart refuses to let go; the journeys continue.

Perhaps it is to relive the past, to reconnect with my roots, to draw strength, to bow once more to that land.

Twelve Years in Parliament : *A Detailed Conversation*

In 2020, a report card of Harivansh's first term (2014–2020, as Member of Parliament and Deputy Chairman) was published. It chronicled five years of his parliamentary journey, a copy of which is available through a QR code printed on the inside back cover. That edition also featured an extensive question-and-answer conversation with Harivansh, spanning subjects from his personal life to his public responsibilities. Those questions are not being repeated in this volume. The present dialogue is confined to a few selected themes. What follows is a concise and edited excerpt from that discussion.

Before entering Parliament, except for a brief experience in Prime Minister's Office, you had observed politics, power, and governance from outside as a journalist. You did not have direct experience of active parliamentary politics. After coming to Parliament, who influenced you most? What did you learn anew? What is the essence of your twelve-year experience?

In these twelve years, I had the opportunity to serve four years as a Member of Parliament and rest of the past eight years, to discharge the responsibility of Deputy Chairman. These years have brought a wide range of experiences to me.

As an MP, I observed that members, who came well prepared, intervened thoughtfully, maintained decorum, avoided entering the Well of the House, and presented their arguments seriously with facts and reasoning. It deeply influenced me. I learned finer nuances of parliamentary procedure from all of them, and I continue to learn even today.

Whaenever members, of any party or viewpoint, spoke with reason and conviction, I listened to very carefully, trying to learn from them. In our tradition, we are taught to learn from nature, from every living being, even from trees and plants. Learning and understanding has always been my passion even till date.

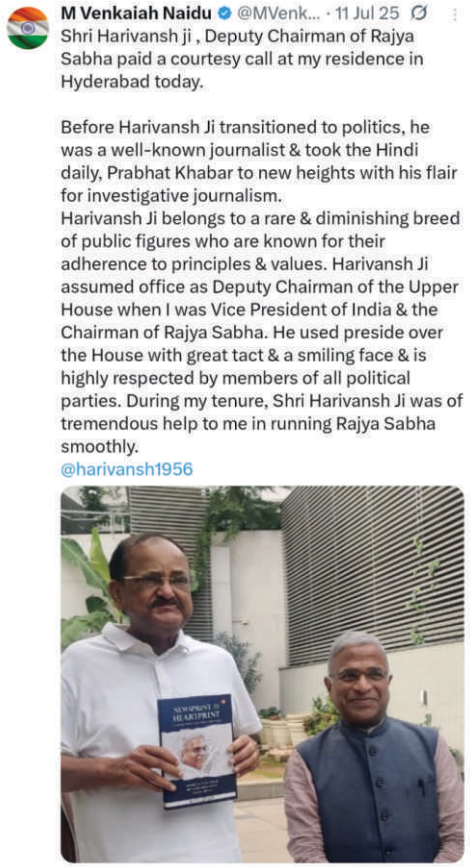
When I first became an MP, I had the opportunity to meet the then President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, who had profound parliamentary knowledge. He shared an advice that became a guiding principle in my parliamentary life. He said that when he first entered Parliament, Shri M.C. Chagla had advised him that an MP's foremost duty is to remain continuously present in the House, whether or not he has to participate. By observing proceedings from beginning to end, one learns immensely. Pranab Babu said that he consciously followed this path throughout.

When I became Deputy Chairman for the first time, the Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu was the Hon'ble Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. He was a strict disciplinarian with long and varied experience in political and public life. He had profound knowledge of parliamentary rules and I learned a great deal from him. Even today, whenever I meet him, there is always something new to learn. Last year, when I visited Hyderabad, I went to meet him at his residence on 11 July 2025. After the meeting, he tweeted a photograph with me and wrote:

''Shri Harivansh ji , Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha paid a courtesy call at my residence in Hyderabad today.

Before Harivansh Ji transitioned to politics, he was a well-known journalist & took the Hindi daily, Prabhat Khabar to new heights with his flair for investigative journalism.

Harivansh Ji belongs to a rare & diminishing breed of public figures who are known for their adherence to principles & values. Harivansh Ji assumed office as Deputy Chairman of the Upper House when I was Vice President of India & the Chairman of Rajya Sabha. He used preside over the House with great tact & a smiling face & is highly respected by members of all political parties. During my tenure, Shri Harivansh Ji was of tremendous help to me in running Rajya Sabha smoothly.''


M Venkaiah Naidu @MVenk... · 11 Jul 25
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@harivansh1956

His words deeply inspiring for me. In response, I retweeted with quote,

"This became a memorable moment of my life. Your warmth and affection always overwhelm me and fill me with energy. My respectful gratitude to you."

When I first entered Rajya Sabha as a Member of Parliament in 2014, Shri P. J. Kurien was the Hon'ble Deputy Chairman. I remain in regular contact with him even today. Whenever I find myself in doubt or in a dilemma, I try to seek clarity and guidance from him or from other senior leaders.

Even as Deputy Chairman also, I tried to remain in the House throughout the proceedings. The established convention had been that the Deputy Chairman may sit inside the House only when the Hon'ble Chairman presides. When a member from the Panel of Vice-Chairpersons is presiding, the Deputy Chairman normally does not take a seat inside the House. However, when not presiding, I made it a point to sit in the House and listen carefully, every issue being discussed, be it during Question Hour, Zero Hour, Special Mentions, or any other discussions, asking myself what I could learn. Just by watching the proceedings and listening the speeches, my understanding of the issues before the country became more deeper. The grassroots realities are reflected in Parliament more comprehensively than in any other forum. One can feel the pulse of the nation from here.

One important transformation I witnessed concerns economic growth. When we were students, it was believed that democratic systems grow slowly, while authoritarian systems grow rapidly. During my membership of the Parliamentary Committee on Defence, chaired by Major General B.C. Khanduri, China's rapid growth often came up. The Committee comprised several distinguished and senior members. A former Prime Minister was also among its members. Many individuals who had held some of the highest offices in public life were part of that Committee. It was said that China's system enabled faster development. Yet I wondered: if our neighbour can grow so rapidly, why cannot we achieve similar accelerated growth within our democratic framework? After these meetings, several experienced members would argue that India had traditionally recorded a growth rate of only 2–3 percent since Independence. This was often referred to as the 'Hindu rate of growth.'

Today, India has demonstrated that that robust economic growth is possible within a democracy as well. From being considered among the 'Fragile Five' economies around 2012–13, India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies stated to become the third largest economy in the world. It took nearly sixty years after Independence to reach a $1 trillion economy in 2007. By 2014, we became a $2 trillion economy. Between 2014 and 2019, despite COVID, we crossed $3 trillion. Today we are approaching nearly $ 4.5 trillion. This has happened within the democratic system. That is a matter of collective pride.

We must carefully reflect on how these achievements became possible. During parliamentary debates, we heard how the Prime Minister introduced the PRAGATI portal to monitor major national projects. Through this platform, a structured mechanism has been established to review and expedite large-scale initiatives across the country. Infrastructure projects worth over ₹ 85 lakh crore, many of which were stalled for decades due to various reasons, remained pending mainly due to lack of budgetary provision. A large number of projects had been announced by previous governments without a follow-up, were systematically taken up and revived. This intervention significantly has accelerated our pace of development. Such new initiatives deserve collective support. They concern national development and should not become subjects of partisan politics. Through efforts of this nature, India has demonstrated that even within a democratic framework, it is possible to emerge as the world's fastest-growing major economy. There are many such examples from which we must learn and continue to move forward.

Parliament's role today must go beyond party lines. If shortcomings or serious challenges exist, they should be addressed with political consensus. That, too, is a responsibility of the legislature, of which government and opposition are a part.

I did also study earlier parliamentary debates of earlier times, procedures, rulings, and speeches of past presiding officers. History teaches that understanding the past prepares a better future. I often reflect on G.V. Mavalankar's statement which he made while addressing the Public Accounts Committee on 10 April 1950. He observed (*as recorded in his book 'Speeches and Writings', pp. 76–77*):

"If I may say so, in our parliamentary life we have evolved a destructive genius instead of a constructive one. Without intention our minds always suspect the bona fides of the Ministers and the officials and we are, as it were, given to believe that we shall be serving the best interest of the country, by opposing the official proposals without any serious effort on our part, for study or thought over the actual problems that require solution. The result of such approach has been, as I see, that notwithstanding our independence and responsive character of

Government, we are not yet tuned to shoulder and share the responsibilities with the Government of the day."

"My point in saying this is not to find fault but only to emphasize the need of a change of outlook and approach to the problems before us. It will not be sufficient now for us to point out the faults and the holes in any scheme laid before us by the Government, but we shall have to study all the factors concerning any problem, think over as to what we would do if entrusted with the work and then suggest the remedies."

In my view, this remains the essence of my twelve-year's experience: to adopt a constructive, solution-oriented mindset in legislative functioning.

Regarding the agricultural laws passed on 20 September 2020, adverse reports appeared in the media about you. It was alleged that you suppressed the voice of the Opposition and facilitated the passage of the Bills. You have not spoken publicly on this so far. Would you like to clarify the truth of those allegations?

It is true that I have not given any public statement on this matter until now. On the day of the incident, I wanted to hold a press conference to clarify all kinds of canards being served against me in Media. But, I was informed that our parliamentary tradition does not permit a presiding officer to hold formal press conferences to clarify the procedural aspects that happen inside the House. Rightly also, he is not required to join issue with Opposition or Media in procedural aspects even if he is being painted black outside. Governors, members of the judiciary, and constitutional authorities maintain similar restraint. In keeping with that tradition, I refrained from making any public statement on this matter until now. It had been, no doubt, highly suffocating for a person like me. However, since the question has been raised today, I would like to place the relevant facts on record.

The Farm Bills were taken up in the Rajya Sabha on 20 September 2020, during the COVID times. Special seating arrangements were in place to maintain mandatory social distancing. Rajya Sabha functioned from three locations, the Rajya Sabha chamber, the Lok Sabha chamber, and the first-floor galleries, to ensure physical distancing. Members were required to wear masks, avoid gathering or coming close to one another, and strictly refrain from gathering in the Well of the House. Naturally the two Houses had to meet one after another. The Rajya Sabha met in the morning, while the Lok Sabha in the afternoon that often continued late into the night. These arrangements posed additional challenges for the presiding officers in conducting the proceedings. The Farm Bills had already been promulgated as Ordinances. The Bills introduced were intended to substitute the Ordinance with duly enacted legislation. This follows an established parliamentary practice: governments issue Ordinances when necessary and subsequently brings Bills to replace them with Acts. The Lok Sabha had already passed these Bills. It is important to note that if a replacing Bill is not passed, the Ordinance lapses that might require re-promulgating them after session ends.

As per parliamentary procedure, the Business Advisory Committee determines the time to be allotted for discussion on each Bill. Four hours were allocated for consideration and passing the Farm Bills by the Business Advisory Committee.

Whoever occupies the Chair is guided strictly by the set Rules of Procedure, conventions, precedents etc. he is provide as official 'Red Folder' that lists procedural details to help the Chair to conduct the proceedings. In conducting the House, procedure is paramount; there is no room for the Chair's personal preferences or inclinations. In this case, the background was that the Ordinance had already been promulgated. Political positions, both in support of and against the Bill, were clearly defined, and the issue had become polarized. Ordinarily, in such situations, the government and the Opposition attempt to arrive at a mutually workable course. But, in this instance, no broad consensus appeared to have emerged. However, this is not in the Chair's domain.

On 20 September, after completion of routine business and before the commencement of the debate, at approximately 9:23 a.m., the Opposition moved two statutory resolutions seeking disapproval of the Ordinance. In accordance with procedure, the concerned Minister also moved the motion for consideration and passage of the Bill. Additionally, seven amendments were moved by members of the Opposition.

At 9:37 a.m., I assumed the Chair from the Hon'ble Chairman Shri Venkaiah Naidu and took charge of the proceedings. Out of the four hours allotted for the debate, approximately three hours and forty-six minutes were utilized. Thirty-three members from different political parties spoke either in favour of or against the Bills. The allegation that the Bills were passed without discussion is therefore incorrect. Still, this false allegation is repeated till date. Nearly the entire scheduled time was used; the remaining fourteen minutes belonged to the Minister, who chose to conclude his remarks briefly. The official record given below clearly reflects this.

After all members had spoken, the Minister was called to reply at 12:51 p.m. As the sitting was scheduled to end at 1:00 p.m., the Chair, as required, sought the sense of the House to extend the sitting beyond 1 p.m. to complete the business. With the majority in agreement, the sitting was extended at around 1:01 p.m. This is the usual practice of Parliament. On the previous two days, the sittings of the House were extended in similar manner with no objection from any side.

At this point, the disorder erupted. Members stormed into the Well of the House, despite COVID restrictions requiring them to remain at their allotted seats. Some advanced toward the Treasury benches and obstructed the Minister who was replying to the debate after everyone else had spoken. The Rule Book was torn and thrown at the Chair, his microphone was damaged, and official papers were snatched and flung. Situation going out of control, the Chair choose to adjourn the House at 1:25 p.m. till 1:42 p.m. with view to restore order.

Under the Rules, once debate concludes, the House proceeds to consider the bill clause by clause. Each clause is initially put to the House for decision by a voice vote. If a division is demanded, it must be granted, but only when order prevails and members are in their seats. On that day, most of the agitating members were demanding division by remaining in the Well. The Chair appealed repeatedly, at least sixteen times, for them to return to their seats and ask for a division so that it could be conducted. They did not comply. In such circumstances, conducting division was practically not possible.

The amendments seeking reference of the Bill to Select Committee were therefore decided by voice vote. Had members returned to their seats, the division would have been given and held; it was their right. By now, it was clear that due to lack of numbers in the House at that point of time, Opposition had no option but to stop the bills' passage by creating ruckus in the House, to an extent where holding division becomes impossible.

As per the official data, a total of 180 Members were present in the House that day and 26 Members had applied for leave of absence. A media report, next day, stated that on the conclusion of the debate, of those present in the House around 110 were from the supporting parties and 70 from those against. These data were claimed to have been verified from the Attendance Register of the Members. Interestingly, no party had issued a whip which is generally done to ensure presence of their members in the House.

It is also a matter of record that, in the past, several Bills had been passed amid disorder without division. The claim that it was unprecedented was, thus, misleading. Just a few days ago, I had read 'By many a happy accident', a book by Shri Hamid Ansari, the former Chairman, Rajya Sabha where he mentions that he did not allow divisions when Women Reservation Bill was passed (on 09 March, 2010) because the House was not in Order. Similarly, AIIMS (Amendment) Bill, 2012 and Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill, 2014 were also passed in the din without division as the House was not in Order.

The Chair, however, was fully prepared to conduct division, and this is on record. The necessary conditions for orderly voting were not allowed to arise. The Chair acted strictly in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and established parliamentary conventions. The factual record is available for scrutiny, and readers may judge for themselves whether the Chair observed due propriety. All the allegations against the Chair were politically motivated also procedurally inaccurate. This is what several parliamentary experts also argued.

To conclude, it may always be kept in mind that the Chair is required to take business before the House forward in adherence to the rules, precedence, conventions etc., while allowing all shades of opinion to be expressed on the floor of House. The Chair can only delay if required, but cannot stop the process without there being a consensus in the House. Decision is ultimately taken by vote – first by voice vote and then by formal division, if demanded. A formal division, as it is possible, only when House is in Order. It would be only fair to a person sitting on the presiding Chair to judge his role in this context. Everything said beyond this becomes, as I said, politically motivated or to lay the blame on the Chair.

As a journalist, you wrote extensively against governments and political authority. For the past twelve years, you have been in politics yourself. Today journalism appears divided, one section claims there are restrictions on free expression; another argues that language against those in power has never been so intemperate. What is your view?

Journalism, by its very character, is grounded in facts and guided by impartiality. Its credibility is both its greatest distinction and the wellspring of its moral authority. Before making allegations, the other side must be heard. Today, one must examine whether the language used against constitutional authorities in recent years was ever used in earlier decades.

This very fact stands as living testimony to the reality behind what is being described today as a “restriction.” The truth speaks for itself. Indeed, public

discourse today enjoys an unprecedented degree of openness and freedom. It appears that a style of journalism driven first by political predisposition or personal belief, and only thereafter by facts, gained prominence after 2014.

In the period when we practiced journalism, the emphasis was on presenting facts and their objective analysis. Before making any allegation, it was considered essential to seek and publish the other side as well. The question we must ask today is whether the Media has drifted away from that standard of neutrality and balance.

Let us do nothing more than recall the ideals of Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi ji and reflect on the present in the light of the path he showed. Nearly 113 years ago, at the age of just 23, he brought out the first issue of the *Pratap*. In its inaugural editorial, titled '*Hamari Neeti*', he outlined five fundamental principles that, in my view, remain enduring benchmarks for journalism even till date. First, what is the purpose of journalism? According to him, the ultimate objective is the welfare of humanity. A vital means to achieve that objective is the progress of India. To take India to an advanced state requires many efforts: the spread of holistic education, safeguarding public interest, sound administration and good governance, and a firm commitment to self-reliance and self-discipline. Second, he was of the opinion that neither praise nor criticism, neither approval nor displeasure, should deflect journalists from their path. Third, and most relevant even today, he declared that journalism must faithfully convey the genuine grievances and sufferings of the people to the government. For this mission, even its own existence should not matter. At the same time, it must not distort government intentions or extract arbitrary meanings to inflame public sentiment. It must stand with both ruler and people in matters of justice, and with neither in matters of injustice.

It is evident that journalism during the freedom movement earned its dignity and moral authority because it prioritized the nation above personal biases. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi ji set the benchmark: highlight real public grievances, not private prejudices; neither blindly oppose nor irresponsibly provoke.

Today, however, we must examine how journalism functions and under whose influence. Dr. Balram Bhargava of the Indian Council of Medical Research, who played a key role during COVID, has in his book 'Going Viral: Making of Covaxin – The Inside Story', recounted the resistance and challenges encountered during the development of India's indigenous vaccine. He described it as a "Macaulay mindset", a colonial-era conditioning that instilled the belief that Indian systems are inherently inferior. During COVID, narratives circulated suggesting that India could not successfully develop a vaccine. One must reflect on the challenges our scientists faced during that period.

All this raises a larger concern: is national interest still the primary guiding principle? During the freedom struggle, nation-building was central to journalism. That focus seems less visible today. Those who practiced journalism in the national interest gave it stature and credibility, standards we still invoke, though perhaps without the same priority to the nation.

As early as 1930, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi offered a candid critique of journalism in India and abroad. He observed that many newspapers were driven by profit and by efforts to present falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood. Many large newspapers, he noted, were controlled by wealthy interests or political alignments, and rarely spoke against their own patrons. Truth, he lamented, was often secondary to convenience. Very few practitioners paused to ask whether they owed allegiance to truth itself.

Therefore, when discussing contemporary journalism, we must avoid extremes. Nothing should come at the cost of the nation. The country must come first. For instance, the Union Budget is subjected to extensive scrutiny, both in the run-up to its presentation and for months thereafter. Yet critical areas such as law and order, industrial policy, health, education, and land allocation fall squarely within the jurisdiction of the States. States chart their own paths of development. When the States advance, the Union naturally advances with them. Several noted economists have observed that if both the Centre and the States converge on a common platform and accord priority to development, the national growth rate could automatically rise by a percentage point or more. Yet, the position and tone adopted by some States appear markedly different. It is worth reflecting whether the media maintains the same degree of vigilance and scrutiny toward State governments as it does toward the Centre, particularly in those States from which major newspapers operate and which are often vocal in critiquing central policies. In matters concerning those very States, however, the approach sometimes seems noticeably restrained.

Commercial pressures, sponsored narratives, paid news, and capital-driven priorities have inevitably reshaped the contours of contemporary journalism. Yet credibility requires steadfast integrity and an unwavering commitment to truth.

The media must therefore undertake earnest introspection about the role it seeks to play in the journey toward a developed India by 2047. Journalism once earned moral authority through sacrifice and commitment to nation-building. That benchmark deserves to be remembered and upheld by today's media—not only as a matter of principle, but also in its own long-term interest.

As Deputy Chairman, what is your view on reducing disruptions and improving the quality and productivity of Parliament?

To address the challenges confronting the conduct of proceedings in the House today, it is essential that we revisit and understand the historical foundations of our country's parliamentary traditions. The Constituent Assembly worked for 2 years, 11 months, and 18 days. It had 308 elected members who debated 2,473 amendments, and yet it witnessed no disruption. They gave shape and structure to a comprehensive Constitution comprising 395 Articles and 8 Schedules.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in his concluding address, congratulated the members of the Constituent Assembly for debating 2,473 amendments without a single instance of division. That is our legacy. After centuries of fragmentation, India was coming together, across languages, cultures, and traditions, and yet complex issues were resolved through dialogue and consensus. That spirit was meant to guide the nation's highest deliberative body.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad also reminded us that the Constitution, however well drafted, would remain a lifeless document unless animated by men and women of character, integrity, and competence. If those entrusted with its operation possess these qualities, even its flaws can be overcome; without them, no Constitution can safeguard a nation.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, on 25 November 1949, issued a similar warning. In a democracy with multiple political parties and divergent ideologies, the crucial question is whether the nation will be placed above party and personal belief. If parties prioritize ideology over national interest, he cautioned, freedom itself could once again be imperiled.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru added that Parliament sets the example for the entire country. The conduct and standards upheld here influence state legislatures and local bodies alike. Members must remember that millions watch their behaviour; even a small erosion of parliamentary dignity can set an unfortunate precedent.

These reminders are especially relevant today. In 1998, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam observed that India would earn respect in the world only by becoming strong, militarily and economically. Strength commands respect. In a world marked by geopolitical instability, disrupted supply chains, and ongoing conflicts, national consolidation and consensus are imperative.

India, once described as part of the "Fragile Five" and on the brink of crisis in 1990, has since charted a remarkable course. The aspiration of becoming a developed nation by 2047 reflects a new national confidence. Despite predictions of severe collapse during the COVID crisis, India today stands among the fastest-growing major economies. According to the IMF's April 2025 outlook, India has emerged as the world's fourth-largest economy and is projected to advance further by 2030.

India leads in digital payments through UPI, the largest vaccine producer, the second-largest steel producer, home to the third-largest startup ecosystem, and among the largest aviation, rail, metro, milk, and rice producers globally. From space technology to digital health, notable advances have strengthened economic growth.

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Such progress requires co-operative federalism, effective coordination between the Centre and the States. The development of the deep-water port at Vizhinjam in Kerala, achieved through cooperation between the Union and State governments, illustrates what constructive politics can accomplish.

The need of the hour is consensus-driven politics that places national interest above partisan consi-derations. From Parliament to state legislatures and down to local bodies, fostering this spirit of cons-tructive engagement must be our fundamental objective today.

You served as a Member of Parliament for four years and four months and were actively engaged both in the House and in public life. Thereafter, you were elected to a constitutional office and became Deputy Chairman. The Rajya Sabha has traditionally been regarded as a revisory Chamber and a forum for serious debate. However, there is now a growing perception that the quality of discussion in it has declined and that disruptions and protests have become more frequent. What would you like to say on this issue?

Why does the Rajya Sabha exist? Our Constitution-makers deliberated carefully on this question, and we would do well to revisit their intent. The Upper House was conceived as a forum for distinguished individuals, those who might not wish to contest elections or may not enter through direct electoral politics, yet who possess expertise and stature in their respective fields. The idea was to elevate the quality of debate, ensure dignity and decorum, and enrich parliamentary functioning in the national interest. If you go though debate in the Constituent Assembly, it becomes clear that the founding fathers wanted to have a Chamber for calmer and more balanced consideration of issues that may not always happen in the directly elected House i.e. Lok Sabha.

Political parties must therefore introspect about the kind of individuals they nominate today. If selections are driven by familial considerations or political expediency, the original spirit of the institution is diluted. Correcting this process lies primarily with the parties themselves.

Further, the smooth functioning of the House cannot depend solely on the Chair. Party leadership must demonstrate commitment to orderly proceedings. Members generally act in accordance with party direction; therefore, it is essential that party leaders ensure adherence to parliamentary rules, conventions, and the established "Lakshman Rekha" of legislative conduct. Without such internal discipline, disruptions will persist.

The All India Presiding Officers' Conferences, bringing together Speakers and Chairpersons from Parliament and State Legislatures, have for decades discussed ways to reduce disruptions and restore legislative dignity. Even in 2002, senior Presiding Officers, Chief Ministers, Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs, Leaders and Whips of Parties were invited to deliberate collectively in the Central House of Parliament on improving parliamentary functioning. Yet, meaningful progress remains limited.

On the fiftieth anniversary of Independence, Parliament had unanimously resolved that Question Hour and Zero Hour would not be disrupted. If even such collective commitments are not honoured, expectations must be tempered.

A second pathway lies in individual responsibility. As Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar emphasized, national interest must take precedence over party interest. If legislators consciously adopt this principle, the quality of debate will improve across all levels of governance.

A third approach could involve civic engagement. Committed young citizens could, for a year, undertake a nationwide initiative to study legislative functioning, document instances of declining standards, and generate public awareness. If citizens become informed and public pressure intensifies, from local bodies to state assemblies and Parliament, behaviour may change.

If we value democracy, and no system is superior, we must strengthen it through discipline, accountability, and a renewed commitment to national interest above partisan considerations.

As an MP, you actively asked questions and participated in debates but after becoming Deputy Chairman, your role became limited to just presiding the House. Do you miss that role?

Yes, as a Member of Parliament, I actively participated in debates, raised questions, and made interventions. That role, by its very nature, carries its own significance and responsibility. However, serving as Deputy Chairman offered a different kind of learning. It has enabled me to study how parliamentary systems around the world are evolving, how technology is reshaping legislative functioning, and how the best practices from other Parliaments can improve the quality of debate in our own legislature. I have gained valuable insights into reforms and innovations that have the potential to strengthen our institutions and enhance their effectiveness over time. In that respect, serving as Deputy Chairman broadened my perspective and opened new avenues of understanding and reflection. It is important that such ideas are discussed and shared with Members of Parliament, legislators, and the wider public, so that our democratic institutions may continue to strengthen and evolve in step with changing times. That has been a continuing endeavour on my part.

One final question. Only a few years ago, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was commemorated across the country. You had, on many such occasions, spoken about Gandhi's continuing relevance. In public life today, do Gandhian principles—particularly the relationship between means and ends—still are relevant in practice?

Irrespective of the time and space, Gandhi's principles have always been relevant and shall remain in the future as well. The reason is simple: the source of Gandhian values lies in the timeless civilizational ethos of India. Gandhian principles, in fact, have always been a guiding force in my life – both in journalism and in public life. Though I generally refrain from speaking about personal matters, being in public life, I may share a few reflections.

I was raised in a farmer's family, where we were taught that only what is earned through one's own labour and effort brings self-respect, dignity, and moral contentment. That alone is virtue; the rest is otherwise. A foundational maxim in our family was: "Stretch your feet only as far as the sheet allows." This has been the yardstick in both my professional and personal life.

In journalism as well as in politics, I have endeavoured to work transparently. I may have committed ordinary human errors, but never a deliberate wrong. After entering Parliament, I publicly disclosed the names and addresses of all those admitted to Kendriya Vidyalayas on my recommendation (a provision that was later discontinued); most were children of ordinary party workers. I made sure that the government residence allotted to me in Delhi was subjected to an annual audit of every item, though conventionally such audits are conducted only at the end of one's tenure. However, I have consistently declared my assets each year in accordance with parliamentary rules.

Over the years, I was invited to deliver lectures at various government and non-government institutions. Even where honoraria and hospitality were offered, I declined them politely. The office I held entitled me to official travel and government accommodation. When visiting my village, I would hire a private vehicle from Patna at my own expense. Upon assuming the constitutional office of Deputy Chairman, a proposal was made for round-the-clock security deployment at my Ranchi residence; I declined it and lived without government security, except for a night guard.

Today, I own a modest house in Ranchi, built from my personal savings during four decades of professional work. There is an ancestral home in my village that remains closed except during visits. I also donated a part of my ancestral land in the village for the construction of a Panchayat building. My effort had always been to avoid wasteful expenditure of public money.

Behind all this lies the influence of Gandhian and civilizational values. The publication of two detailed report cards on my twelve years of parliamentary work is another step in that direction. These reports also document how and where my MP Local Area Development funds were utilized.

In that sense, Gandhian and timeless Indian values are enduring. They remain a source of strength for India and for Indians alike.

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Conversation about books that shaped thoughts

"Humanity Will Survive If Books Survive"

Harivansh has always had a deep interest in books. As a reader, he is as interested in history and literature as he is in the economic, social, political, cultural, and technological changes in the country and around the world. This love for books has enriched his personal library at his residence in Ranchi and New Delhi.

Below is a translated version of a conversation between ***Harivansh*** *and* ***Dr. Vinay Kumar Singh*** *— an author, cultural activist, and professor from Motihari (Champaran, Bihar) on April 23, 2024 as part of* ***World Book Day****.*

Vinay: Books intervene in our process of thought and make us capable of dialogue; they enable us to engage in meaningful discourse. Books require readers, and readers require books. As Prayag Shukla once said 'Man waits for his story to be heard and he writes books, and there are books waiting to be read'. So tell us what kind of books do you like to read?

Harivansh: Vinay ji, I cannot say precisely when I developed this intimate attachment to books. However, today I can certainly say that without books, life would be dull. In moments of solitude and in times of crisis, books are a key medium of inspiration and motivation. I feel that this natural and spontaneous affinity for books is perhaps something bestowed by nature itself. I have enjoyed reading since my early days.

If I were to name a few books that I have read more than once, I would mention some among them. For instance, there is '*Samar Gaatha*', translated by Amrit Rai. Then there is a novel by Howard Fast, titled The Glorious Brothers'. It portrays how a human being struggles for identity, for personal freedom, for independent thought, for one's own homeland, country, and very existence. It is an extraordinary novel. Its characters remain etched in my memory.

Another work that has had a profound impact on my life is that of Lord Krishna. There are remarkable dimensions to Krishna's life. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia observed that in our tradition it is believed that Krishna was the embodiment of all the arts. While Rama is said to have exemplified the principle of maryada (restraint and righteousness), Krishna is regarded as proficient and accomplished in all sixteen kalas. Numerous books written on Krishna have remained close to me, but the eight-volume series written by Manu Sharma on Krishna stands out as particularly distinctive. As far as I recall, the titles include '*Narad Ki Bhavishyavani*', '*Durabhisandhi*', '*Dwarika Ki Sthapana*', '*Lakshagriha*', '*Khandav Dah*', '*Rajasuya Yajna*', '*Sangharsh*', and '*Pralay*'. These books have given so many different perspectives on language, emotions, philosophical grounding.

There is also the biography of Premchand, the distinguished work Kalam Ka Sipahi, written by his son, Amrit Rai.

Thereafter, books on history greatly attracted me. Among them is Will Durant's eleven-volume The Story of Civilization. His remarkable book on India, The Case for India, written in 1930, introduced the world to the unique aspects of our country at a time very few truly understood Bharat.

We have forgotten such literature covering India's civilisational history after independence. Our Upanishads are wonderful. Ramayana and Mahabharata, I would say that whatever questions there are in life, the vision, answers, or solutions to all of them are in these books. There's really nothing else out there. It is a prevalent saying that the question related to life that is not in the Mahabharata or Ramayana is not in creation itself.

The series of books Will Durant is also insightful. These include 'Our Oriental Heritage : The Story of Civilization' (Volume 1-2), 'The Life of Greece' (Volume 2-3), 'Caesar and Christ' (Volume 3), 'The Story of Civilization' (Volume 4-5), 'The Renaissance' (Volume 5-6), 'The Story of Civil War' (Volume 5-6), 'The Reformation : The Story of Civil (Volume 6), 'The Age of Louis XIV' (Volume 9-10), 'Rousseau and Revolution : The Story of Civilization (Volume 10), The Age of Napoleon: The Story of Civilization (Volume 11).

After becoming a Member of Parliament, I purchased all those volumes in instalments. The total cost was perhaps around eighty to eighty-five thousand rupees. Besides these, he has two other shorter books.

On one occasion, I had the opportunity to visit the United States as a Member of Parliament. There, I purchased one of his books The Fallen Leaves: Last Words on Life, Love, War. In another book Greatest Minds and Ideas of All Time (2002) and Heroes of History (2012), he discusses about the world's foremost thinkers who have influenced history, civilization, and time in new ways; who have offered fresh perspectives and left a lasting impact; which poets and philosophers have shaped the world.

There is a book by Paul Kennedy titled The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1502–2000, which examines how, over five centuries, great civilizations of the world emerged and declined. When I read it some twenty to twenty-five years ago, I came to understand how powerful nations and civilizations develop.

Alongside such works spiritual books have had a profound impact on my life. Pramahansa Yogananda's 'Autobiography of a Yogi' is one such work Today we Indians may not be very familiar with Paul Brunton, but more than a century ago he engaged deeply with Indian spirituality. His well-known book is A Search in Secret India. Brunton has written fifteen to

twenty other books as well.

Radhanath Swami, a saint associated with ISKCON and originally from the United States, has written two remarkable books from a spiritual perspective. One is titled The Journey Home, and the other The Journey Within. The former has been translated into Hindi as Anokha Safar. Both are memorable works. They explore fundamental questions such as: What is life? What is the world? What is the meaning of living?

Today, spirituality has often been reduced to a marketplace commodity. These books, however, reveal the true essence of spirituality. There is the tradition of Maharshi Aurobindo and the tradition of Ramana Maharshi—both of whom have contributed profoundly to my spiritual thought.

In a similar manner, there are the discourses and the life of Paramahansa Ramakrishna. Master Mahashaya (Master M) compiled several volumes based on his teachings. There is also the Vivekananda Rachanavali (Complete Works of Vivekananda). It should be remembered that Paramahansa Ramakrishna—considered uneducated in colonial India—awakened a profound spiritual and social consciousness. A great soul like Swami Vivekananda emerged from that very stream. Vivekananda's writings, work, and discourses became a life force for India. The awakening of India occurred through that spiritual and transcendental current whose seeds were sown by Paramahansa Ramakrishna.

Swami Satyananda, who established the Munger Yoga School, and his successor Swami Niranjanananda, carried this legacy forward. There is also the Rikhiapeeth Ashram in Deoghar, founded by Swami Satyananda Ji, where Swami Satsangi Ji resides. They have authored original works on spirituality and yoga, as well as writings on devotion and Indian spiritual traditions. None of them ever turned spirituality into a subject of publicity or a means of business; their publications likewise never commercialized spirituality.

Sant Sri M has written several books. The first of his works that I read was Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master (A Yogi's Autobiography). Another important book by him is The Journey Continues: A Sequel to Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master. (He has written several other works as well.) Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj has authored numerous books. These individuals sought to discover the meaning of life, living, and the world.

Former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was a great advocate of books. As far as I recall, in Outlook or another magazine, he elaborated at length on eight to ten books and said that every person should keep them close throughout life. I found those insightful too.

Vinay: Yes, indeed. In Dr. Kalam's dialogues with Arun Kumar Tiwari (Guiding Souls) is also interesting on the purpose of life.

Harivansh: You are absolutely right. Let me mention two of the books recommended by Dr. Kalam. One book—which I would say I keep by my bedside and read frequently—is Lillian Eichler Watson's 'Light from Many Lamps: A Treasury of Inspiration'. It is an extraordinary work. I would highly recommend it. Vinay ji, Life is a blend of ups and downs, despair and hope, faith and doubt. When one passes through such moments, books like these provide the strength to move ahead. Dr. Kalam had said that this was a book one could keep for a lifetime.

Dr. Kalam also shared how he found this book at a second-hand bookstore. Discovering this book marked a turning point in his life. He said that whenever he felt dejected or discouraged, this book acted as a guiding light. The second important book he recommended was Empires of the Mind by Denis Waitley (1996).

Continuing on the philosophical aspect, let expand about the book Samar Gatha that talks about our freedom fighters. It explores what human identity is, what one's sense of self and cultural values mean. These are like the flow of blood in the arteries—nationality, self-respect, and freedom are beyond price. It is the story of a people who paid the price to live on their own terms. It movingly describes that flame of inspiration within human beings that never extinguishes. People change, civilizations change, nations rise and fall; but any individual or community that possesses that inner flame of self-respect becomes exceptional. Such histories inspire future generations.

Recently, I visited Haldighati and stood there for a while. I was reminded of Dr. Lohia's words: "To understand India's national character over the last thousand years, one sentence is enough—that if there is one Haldighati, there are fifty or a hundred Buxars." In Arun Bhole's important book 'Rajneeti Meri Preyasi', which is significant for understanding the politics of India, Bihar, and the Hindi belt, he writes that Haldighati is the place where, on 18 June 1576, Rana Pratap of Mewar fought a fierce battle against the forces of Akbar. Rana Pratap fought almost to the last soldier. However, on 22 October 1764, at the field of Buxar (in Bihar), when the British faced Indian forces, the combined army of Nawab Mir Qasim of Bengal, Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh, and Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II numbered nearly fifty thousand soldiers, whereas the British had merely three to four thousand. Yet the battle lasted scarcely five minutes, and victory went to the British commander, Major Hector Munro. It is through such books that we are able to understand this national character.

I have read numerous books on the Mahabharata and on Krishna by writers such as Durga Bhagwat (the Marathi author), as well as many Gujarati, Bengali, Odia, and Marathi authors. Kashinath ji has written a noteworthy book on the final days of Krishna. However, as for the complete life of Krishna, I have read Manu Sharma's eight-volume series on Krishna countless times. Narendra Kohli Ji, after writing the multi-volume Ramkatha, also wrote extensively on the Mahabharata in several volumes. Such works have had a profound impact on my mind and intellect. Dr. Lohia has also written about Krishna.

Krishna lives in the popular consciousness as God incarnate, yet we seldom remember the immense pain, suffering, and human trials he endured after being born in human form. All the roles that encompass worldly pain, struggle, sacrifice, duty, and responsibility—whether in imagination or in lived reality—are present in Krishna's life. That is why Krishna inspires in

every moment of sorrow and joy, loss and gain, life and death. He is the one who dances upon the hood of death itself. He revels in music and dance, yet at the time of the great destruction—the Mahabharata war—he delivers the message of the Gita while standing amidst death. He is the one who even grants fearlessness to the tiger that takes life. He is extraordinary.

It is said that what exists in history lies also in the womb of the future. Books of history are the most effective key to understanding the mysteries of the world. The message of the Mahabharata is that Time alone is the ultimate truth. The individual is not supreme. The same Arjuna, the same arrows, the same Gandiva bow—yet he was defeated by the Bhils. While returning from Dwarka, he had everything with him—soldiers, the women of Dwarka—yet the Bhils overpowered him and carried them away. Thus, it is not the individual who is great; it is Time that is great.

What does history teach us? That mighty empires, great powers, and heroes who consider themselves indelible are in fact creations of their time. Vyasa states in the Mahabharata that Time is powerful. Individuals are neither immortal nor inherently mighty. The waves of time lift them upward and can just as easily bring them down.

In English, there is a book on the Mahabharata by Satyamurti titled Mahabharata: A Modern Retelling. It poignantly describes Arjuna's return to Hastinapura after Krishna's departure from his mortal body. When Arjuna is defeated by the Bhils on the way, all the brothers go to Vyasa. What Vyasa says there is crucial for understanding creation, existence, and the significance of Time.

Napoleon the Great, when imprisoned on the island of Saint Helena, wrote that time is powerful and destiny is supreme. This was by someone who once declared that nothing was impossible in his life. Thus, life is not merely what we see before us. To understand the deeper mystery of life beyond appearances, we turn to spiritual books.

Vinay: I do recall that you had mentioned many of these literature around philosophy in your previous book.

Harivansh: I would like to explain how I came to understand our Hindi heartland through books. As a student, to comprehend the society of the Hindi region and its transformations, I did not need to read sociologists. Instead, to understand the political conditions of those times, the cultural milieu, the economic system, and the intricate fabric of families, I read five or six novelists. I believe that if one reads them, there is no need to consult a sociologist to understand that era. These include Rag Darbari (Shrilal Shukla), Alag Alag Vaitarani (Shivprasad Singh), Aadha Gaon (Rahi Masoom Raza), Maila Anchal(Phanishwarnath Renu), and Behaya Ke Jungle (a collection of reflective essays by Krishna Bihari Mishra). Besides these, many other books have been an integral part of my life.

I was also deeply interested in reading the biographies and writings of major revolutionaries and historical figures from India and abroad—Gandhi, Acharya Narendra Dev, Nehru, Dr. Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), among others. Bharatiya Jnanpith used to translate outstanding works from Indian regional languages. Sasta Sahitya Mandal and other publishers, provided our generation the opportunity to read the finest literary works of leading Bengali, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Malayalam, Gujarati, and Urdu writers. The travel writings and ideas of the philosopher and economist Prof. Krishnanath also left a deep impression on me. In the same spirit, I read some works of Rahul Sankrityayan. Chandra Shekhar's two-volume jail diary and his editorials (published in his journal) are excellent material for understanding Indian politics. Communist literature, including the works of Che Guevara and Julius Fučík, as well as other significant authors, also generated interest. I even read Naxalite literature extensively, in order to understand the various ideological currents active within society and the ways in which they think. Writers like Mahashweta Devi and other such Bangla writer Rabindra Babu, Bankim Chandra, Tara Shankar Bangopadhyay and many more shaped our generation.

Being surrounded by books gives me immense joy. I read continuously and keep purchasing books. I have lived in Kolkata, Mumbai, and Delhi, and in each of these cities I frequently visited their well-known bookstores. During my travels to Bengaluru and Chennai as well, I would visit the prominent bookshops there. For over twenty-five years, visiting bookstores has been an emotional attachment for me. I can say with conviction that if books did not exist, even an ordinary person like me would not be able to attempt thinking in a different way.

Vinay: Could you elaborate further on the purpose of reading and whether reading makes us more sensitive to the world around us?

Harivansh: Books influence the ways in which you think and understand; they shape both the heart and the mind. Poetry, short stories, novels, and drama—these are the forms that truly transform a person. Politics or ideology can change systems to a certain extent, but it is literature that changes human beings.

The transformations the world has witnessed thus far have been deeply influenced by ideas and philosophy. Today, technology is gradually taking their place. If you look at the last two and a half centuries of world history, from the beginning of the French Revolution until nearly the end of the twentieth century, you will see how profoundly Rousseau and Voltaire influenced the French Revolution. In Russia, great literary figures such as Maxim Gorky and Tolstoy played significant roles, and writers were instrumental in the Russian Revolution as well. Stalin once said that writers are the soul of society. Similarly, during the periods of change in China and Vietnam, literature played a notable role.

Thereafter, India and the world witnessed the emergence of Gandhi. With Gandhi's arrival, imperialism began to end across the world. Earlier, no one could have imagined such a possibility. For the first time, the world saw that non-violence could become a means for change. Gandhi brought down an empire upon which the sun was said never to set. This was

the power of the journey of human thought. Reflective books, essays, and ideas paved the path for that transformation.

Consider the role of writers and poets in India's freedom struggle. Consider the role of poets in the JP Movement fifty years ago. Dr. Dharamvir Bharati's famous poem on JP, the poems of Dhoomil, the ghazals of Dushyant—there were numerous writers and poets. Phanishwarnath Renu and Nagarjun hold their own importance. Thus, it is literature that changes the human mind. Beyond a certain point, there is no medium as effective as literature. This is my personal belief.

Take, for example, our Maharshi Aurobindo's work Savitri. What extraordinary imagination it embodies! We ordinary people are scarcely able to comprehend its depth.

Vinay: A philosopher once wrote that the Nobel Committee did not possess the capacity to truly understand Savitri.

Harivansh: That is possible. When I visited places associated with these great figures, it was a different experience altogether. Whether at Ramana Maharshi's ashram in Tiruvannamalai or at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry, the experience was deeply enriching.

I must also say that if we wish to understand India's spiritual heritage, we cannot do so without knowing Swami Vivekananda and his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who had no formal education, gave to India and the world a figure like Vivekananda. It was he who ignited that consciousness in India which enables us to stand where we are today as a nation and society—aspiring even to become a spiritual guide to the world. He kindled that intense flame in Indian consciousness whose light is gradually spreading across the globe.

The first time I visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, about twenty years ago, I went to the room where he had lived. For twenty-four consecutive years, Sri Aurobindo remained in that single room. He undertook solitary spiritual practice, read and wrote. Just imagine remaining in a small room for twenty-four years. We cannot stay there even for twenty-four days, let alone twenty-four weeks or twenty-four months. Yet he spent twenty-four years in that same room, having chosen that path of spiritual discipline of his own free will.

His parents had ensured that he studied only Latin, Greek, and English, so that no shadow of Indianness of his own Bengali language and culture would fall upon him. And you know that in states like Bengal, people have an extraordinary attachment to their language and culture. Sri Aurobindo was from Bengal, yet efforts were made to distance him even from his own language. His parents tried to provide him with an elite, foreign environment. Yet the same Sri Aurobindo became one of the greatest exponents of Indian identity through his writings, his thought, his understanding, and his spiritual practice.

The life of Ramana Maharshi is similar in its depth and simplicity. Reading books associated with these figures offers a profound vision of life. It seems to me that without books, human life would be impoverished.

Vinay: I have two more questions, but they have already been answered. One was about the creative source of your writing that has been addressed. Whether books provide spiritual direction—that too has been answered in the affirmative. Now, just one or two brief questions: What have you written that gave you the greatest satisfaction after completing it? And what would you still like to write, something you have not yet written but wish to?

Harivansh: During my years as a journalist, I travelled to many countries across the world. Observing and understanding how different societies transformed themselves, how people changed their lives, how human resolve, how stories of courage and determination can shape a new destiny. When I wrote about such themes and presented them to my readers, I felt a deep sense of satisfaction. It seemed to me that I was doing meaningful work in the context of my own country and society.

After traveling through such nations and studying their histories, I felt a strong urge to tell my fellow countrymen that through our own courage, resolve, and determination, we too can elevate our nation. What could our role be in that process?

To give a concrete example: when I first visited Singapore, I tried to understand how it transformed itself. It was once a marshy, dirty, and highly underdeveloped region. How did that country rise to stand among the world's most developed nations? What was the contribution of its leader, Lee Kuan Yew? His autobiography, published in two volumes: From Third World to First: Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew is remarkable. I also read other books about Singapore and about him. Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill interviewed him in a book titled Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World. It is a book of extraordinary global vision and foresight. It also discusses India.

Every Indian should read it. What kind of people are we? Why, despite being a nation full of potential, have we not become a global superpower? How did China move ahead? If the India that has begun to change course after 2014 had taken this path earlier, it might today have been a superpower. If one wishes to understand these questions, one must read this book. It also offers predictions about China and a future perspective on the United States. Observations made decades ago in that book are highly relevant for understanding today's world. In particular, every Indian should read it to gain perspective on our nation's future. Lee Kuan Yew wrote about India with great passion. In his autobiography and in this book, he mentioned that in his youth he had looked upon India with great hope, but India did not live up to those expectations.

After reading him and writing extensively about him and about Singapore, I felt a sense of satisfaction that I had tried to touch the minds of people in my country and society. I had fulfilled my responsibility, whether or not it made an impact. Honest writing, in that sense, is an effort to reach the minds and hearts of readers, to influence their thinking and reflection.

During my time in journalism, I tried to explain why we ourselves are responsible for not becoming a major global power, for not becoming a prosperous nation, for failing to shape a new destiny. What is our duty as citizens? What should our sense of nationality be? What kind of thinking should guide us? What are our responsibilities? What kind of governance should we aspire to?

Between 2004 and 2010, I closely studied China and other nations, observing how they transformed their destinies in a short span of time, wrote a new history of economic development through sheer determination. I also reflected on how we were falling behind. At that time, I wrote at length about where India had fallen short, what more we needed to do, what the mindset of our people should be. It is one thing to expect everything from leadership; but alongside leadership, what should be our own public participation and civic role? I wrote seriously and extensively on these themes, and such writing gave me great inner peace.

Traveling through villages and reporting from Naxal-affected areas also brought me deep satisfaction. When I undertook the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage for inner reflection, I wrote about what life is, what spirituality is. Writing that travelogue also brought a sense of knowing oneself.

I also wrote the biography Chandra Shekhar: The Last Icon of Ideological Politics (Rupa Publications India, 2019), describing how he rose from an ordinary family background and carved out his place in the world through his own resolve and on his own terms. The English-speaking elite class often dismissed him. Today, many people do not even know much about him. Writing that biography was also a rewarding experience.

Three of my books, on the Kailash pilgrimage, spirituality, and a few great personalities have been published by Vani Prakashan: Srishti Ka Mukut: Kailash Mansarovar, Kalash, and Path Ke Prakash Punj (Vani Prakashan, 2022). Two of these (excluding the Kailash travelogue) are compilations of articles that were originally published in newspapers. I felt a deep sense of satisfaction in writing them as well.

Similarly, the articles I wrote as a journalist after observing other countries around the world were published by Rajkamal under the title Dil Se Maine Duniya Dekhi (2018).

As for what I would like to write in the future — there are many subjects that remain in my mind. The perennial question remains: Why is this creation? Krishna, who fascinates me so deeply how his life itself is a message. The poignancy of Krishna's end moves me profoundly. I read that episode again and again, and the more I read it, the more inwardly unsettled I feel. Just as Krishna accepted life with simplicity and grace, he accepted death in the same spirit. He himself paved the way for a situation in which Dwarka, having become immensely powerful, had begun to lose its values. The very city that had been built upon values when those values began to decay, Krishna himself allowed it to be punished. He showed how arrogance must ultimately face consequence. I deeply wish that someday I might express my thoughts, even in a small way, on this aspect of Krishna.

In the same manner, the life of Rama also deeply attracts me. There is no greater symbol of maryada—of righteous conduct and moral restraint—in the world. Then there is the enlightenment of the Buddha. When I visited Japan and observed the temperament, character, and self-respect of the Japanese people, I felt a desire to convey those observations to my own people through writing. Whether I will be able to accomplish this or not, I cannot say.

Vinay: It is our hope as well that your wish is fulfilled and that we may read those works. Many of my questions—about your favorite books and authors—have already been answered. One final question: in today's context, do you think printed books will go out of circulation because of e-books?

Harivansh: I belong to the generation of books. Even today, I purchase at least eight to ten books every month, spending on average seven to eight thousand rupees. I have no other indulgence or expense in life—no passion for clothes, no interest in clubs. For a very long time now, books have been my primary love. The only problem at home is finding space to keep them! I grew up amidst books, and therefore I cannot imagine living in a world devoid of them.

There is a book by M.C. Chagla titled Roses in December, his memoir. You know that M.C. Chagla served as India's Education Minister and also as Chief Justice (of the Bombay High Court). He writes that when Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was President, he would visit him along with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He observed that near Radhakrishnan's bed there was a platform stacked with dusty books, and beside it a simple narrow bed on which he slept. Someone once suggested that the dust on the books be cleaned. But Radhakrishnan refused, saying that no one else should clean them; dusting and arranging them was his own task. He was so emotionally attached to his books that even the slightest displacement would make him uneasy. That is what living attachment to books means.

I belong to that generation which does not believe that books will disappear. The technical medium of reading may change—it already has. First came the computer, then the laptop; now there are various devices and e-readers, and more new instruments will emerge. But the content remains the same—the content that comes through books will continue through these media. Even today, in many parts of the world—whether in the United States, Britain, or elsewhere—large bookstores are regarded with respect, and books continue to be sold. Therefore, I do not believe that printed books will vanish. It is the content of books that enriches, energizes, and inspires—not merely the paper or the machine.

Vinay: Because the tactile joy of holding a printed book cannot be replaced by an e-book.

Harivansh: I agree with you one hundred percent, Vinay ji.

Vinay: Books energise the human mind. If the habit of reading endures, books will endure. If writers continue to write meaningfully and readers continue to read thoughtfully, words will remain witnesses to our civilization and culture. Thank you for giving us so much of your time.

Harivansh: Humanity will survive, if books survive. Thank you very much, Vinay ji.

Notable quotes on Parliament, Politics, Public life

Politics as an Art - Sir Robert Menzies (Former Prime Minister Australia)[1]

Here is my thesis. The business of politics is of supreme importance. Politics is both a fine art and an inexact science. We have concentrated upon its scientific aspects – the measurement and estimation of economic trends, the organization of finance, the devising of plans for social security, the discovery of what to do. We have neglected it as an art, the delineating and practice of how and when to do these things and above all, how to persuade a self-governing people to accept and loyally observe them. This neglect is of crucial importance, for I am prepared to assert that it is only if the art of politics succeeds that the science of politics will be efficiently studied and mastered.

In short, the art is no less important than the science. In these days this sounds like a paradox. But it should not surprise any student of twentieth-century history, for history is a tragic story of how science (which so easily becomes an instrument of hatred and destruction) has outrun the art of living, to the singular discomfort and confusion and almost to the ruin of mankind.

As one who has for twenty years been engaged in political work in his own country, I have been continually surprised and dejected at the indifference to politics shown by so many thousands of active, intelligent and well-informed men and women. Their spoken attitude is either one of contempt for 'politicians' and all their works, or one of indifference. 'I am much too busy to bother about politics.' Yet, not only all the major economic conditions of their ordinary lives, but also all the great factors which determine peace or war, international co-operation or conflict, are the creatures of politics and of political action. To despise or ignore them is therefore a sort of suicidal folly.

Such attitudes are the evidence, not of a superior intelligence, but of a defective sensibility and imagination. Tariffs, taxes, plans of national development, the proportion which exists or should exist between the administrative and the productive groups, the facilitation and control of transport, monetary policies, services of health, the provision and conditioning of social benefits and industrial security, these and a hundred other great elements are the product of the applied science of politics.

[1] : It was published in the New York Times Magazine on November 28, 1948.

न सा सभा यत्र न सन्ति वृद्धाः, वृद्धा न ते ये न वदन्ति धर्मम्।
धर्मः स नो यत्र न सत्यमस्ति, सत्यं न तद्यच्छलमभ्युपैति॥
(महाभारत, सभा पर्व 5/35/58)

"That is no true assembly where wise elders are absent. Those elders are not wise who do not speak of righteousness. That righteousness is not pure if divorced from truth. And that truth is not genuine if laced with deceit."

(Mahabharat, Sabha Parv 5/35/58) Inscription on the walls of Samvidhan Sadan (Old Parliament Building)

नासौ मुनिर् यस्य मतं न भिन्नम्।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वम् निहितं गुहायाम्
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्था॥

"Views of sages may differ; the essence of Dharma is subtle. The wisest path lies in the footsteps of noble predecessors."

(Mahabharat)

"So far as its deliberative functions are concerned, it will be open to us to make very valuable contributions, and it will depend on our work whether we justify this two chamber system, which is now an integral part of our Constitution. So, it is a test to which we are submitted. We should try to do everything in our power to justify to the public of this country that a second Chamber is essential to prevent hasty legislation."

- First Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

'Parliament should be judged by how it functions and its significant contributions rather than who disrupted Parliament forcefully. This cannot be the benchmark. The benchmark should be how many hours the Parliament worked and how much positive work was done'.

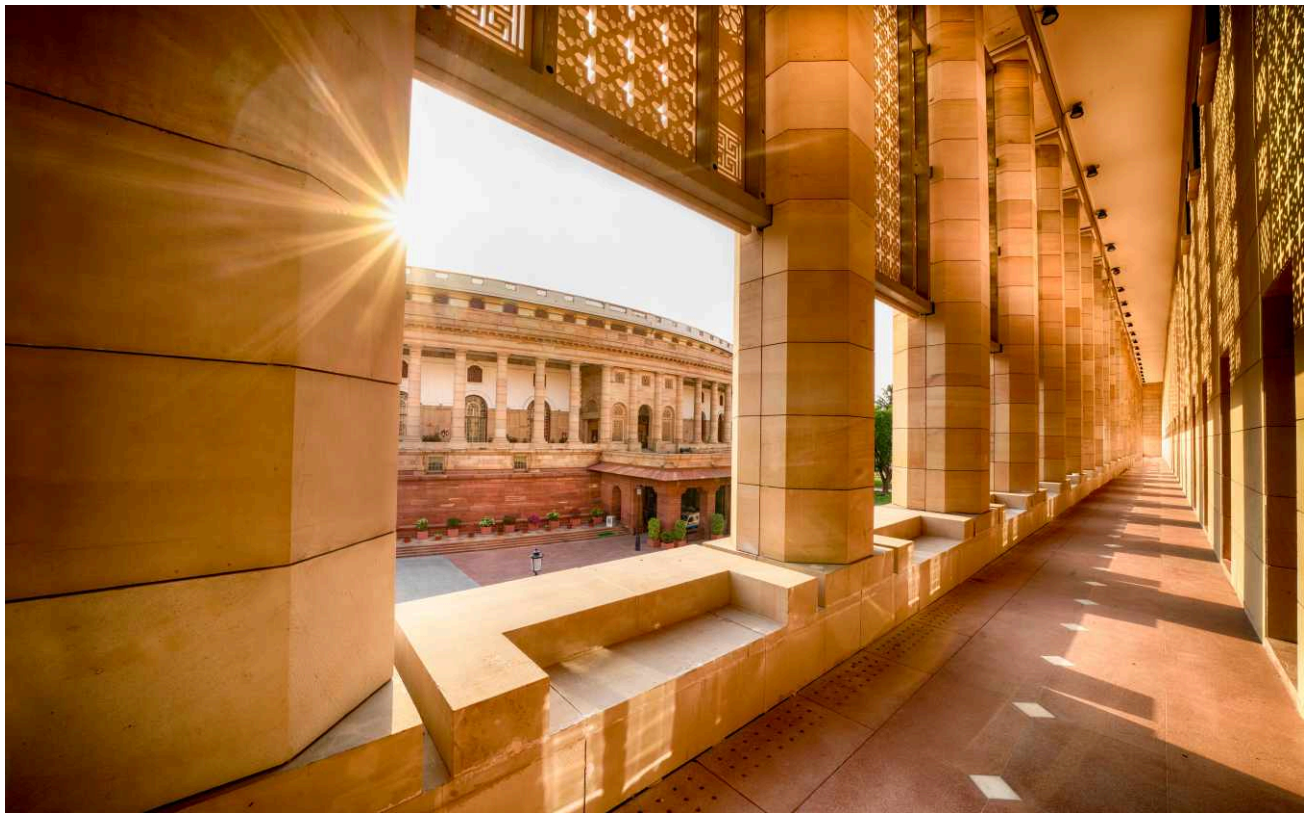
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi

"The Speaker has also a very potent though indirect power over Members while they are in the House...none of his decisions in the House can be challenged even though he may be wrong...he exercises a very effective power of control because of the rule that only that Member can put a question or can speak who is called upon by the Speaker to do."

- First Speaker of Lok Sabha, GV Mavalankar

“If I may say so, in our parliamentary life we have evolved a destructive genius instead of a constructive one. Without intention our minds always suspect the bona fides of the Ministers and the officials and we are, as it were, given to believe that we shall be serving the best interest of the country, by opposing the official proposals without any serious effort on our part, for study or thought over the actual problems that require solution. The result of such approach has been, as I see, that notwithstanding our independence and responsive character of Government, we are not yet tuned to shoulder and share the responsibilities with the Government of the day.”“My point in saying this is not to find fault but only to emphasize the need of a change of outlook and approach to the problems before us. It will not be sufficient now for us to point out the faults and the holes in any scheme laid before us by the Government, but we shall have to study all the factors concerning any problem, think over as to what we would do if entrusted with the work and then suggest the remedies.”

- Shri G.V. Mavalankar in the Public Accounts Committee (10 April, 1950)



" If the people who are elected are capable and men of character and integrity, they would be able to make the best even of a defective constitution. If they are lacking in these, the constitution cannot help the country. After all, a constitution like a machine is a lifeless thing. It acquires life because of men who control it and operate it, and India needs today nothing more than a set of honest men who will have the interest of the country before them. "

- Dr. Rajendra Prasad while addressing the Constituent Assembly

“...unless we in Parliament (including vidhan sabha and vidhan parishad) realise our responsibilities and shoulder the task of looking after the welfare and good of the people within a reasonable time, I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind that this Parliament (or vidhan sabha and vidhan parishad) will be treated by the public outside with utter contempt. It would be a thing not wanted at all."

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

“...however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot...The working of a Constitution does not depend wholly upon the nature of the Constitution. The Constitution can provide only the organs of the state such as the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. The factor on which the working of those organs of the state depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics. Who can say how the people of India and their parties will behave."

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar while addressing the Constituent Assembly

"...we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost for ever."

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly on 25 Nov. 1949

"We want to maintain good name and dignity of this House. Every one of us is interested in that as much as I am. I do not want it to be said that sometimes these discussions suggest that we are not behaving like serious, responsible Members of Parliament but rather like irresponsible professional agitators."

- First Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. S Radhakrishnan

"We have seen that on a number of occasions in the past our democracy had to face many a crisis but our people and Members of Parliament withstood the test and sorted out all the problems in a dignified way. Today a person like me finds himself alone in the corridors of Parliament and at times, I have a feeling of irritation to which, Honourable Speaker, Sir, you have also made a mention....Sir, it is not almost every day that history is knocking at our door? Is that door not going to be opened? Narrow-mindedness and communication gap have made the environs in Parliament stifling at times. Can't you all sit together and find a way out to make Parliament once again reflective of the People's aspirations."

- Former Prime Minister Chandrashekhar while delivering remarks after accepting 'Outstanding Parliamentarian' award in 1995

"Parliament does set some kind of an example to the rest of the country. As we behave here to each other, towards our work, towards the general public, so to some extent others will behave elsewhere, whether in the State Legislatures or in the many other organs of self-government that exist in the country or that are growing up, right way down to that foundation of our democracy the Panchayats in villages. Therefore, on all of us rests this great responsibility, not only to behave as we should behave, but to remember always that a million eyes are upon us and we may not do something that brings the slightest discredit on Parliament or set a wrong line before the people".

- First Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru

'I have on occasions felt amazed at the change in the conduct of some Members who, when they first entered Parliament, used to be serious and sober speakers but, after having been there some years turned almost into rabble-rousers. They said that, as long as they concentrated merely on making a thoughtful contribution in a debate, the media took little notice of them because of which their constituents kept complaining of their inactivity in Parliament. But once they began creating scenes in the House, the media began taking prominent notice of them'.

- Former Chairman of Rajya Sabha Krishna Kant

"I believe that unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. In this world, fear has no place. Only strength respects strength. We must be strong not only as a military power but also as an economic power. Both must go hand in hand."

- Former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

"Of what avail is the most broadly popular representative system, if the electors do not care to choose the best member of Parliament, but choose him who will spend most money to be elected? How can a representative assembly work for good, if its members can be bought, or if their excitability of temperament uncorrected by public discipline or private self control, makes them incapable of calm deliberation, and they resort to manual violence on the floor of the House, or shoot at one another with rifles?"

- John Stuart Mill
(English Philosopher and Political thinker)

Foreword to Books

Over the past twelve years, Harivansh has written forewords for books by authors, journalists, and researchers from different parts of the country. These books span a wide range of subjects. His long years in journalism nurtured a natural curiosity across disciplines, and from the very beginning he developed the habit of engaging with diverse themes. As a result, requests to write forewords for books on varied topics have continued to come to him regularly.

Some note-worthy books are listed below, which offer a glimpse into the breadth and diversity of his writing engagement.

Jharkhand Mein Mahatma Gandhi – Anuj Sinha

Ek Desh Ek Chunav – Anup Barnwal

Path Breaker Path Maker – Karpoori Thakur

Sansadiya Patrakarita – Dr Harish Lakhera

Pople Mukh ka Painapan – Prakash Dubey

Jharkhand Mein Media – Prof Devvrat Singh and Prof Kirti Singh

Namami Kashi: Kashi Ek Vishvakosh – Vimal Mishra

Broken Promises – Mrityunjay Sharma

Ekla Chalo Re – Inder Singh Namdhari

Sanatan ka Mahakumbh – Neeraj Mishra

Gramcharitmanas – Santosh Singh

Bihar Mein Patrakarita – Sanjay Sinha

Siwan Maati ki Vibhutiyan – Dr Mannu Rai

Siyasat ki Dastan – Surendra Kishore

Sansmarannama – Trilokideep

Syaas Lekhan
– Compilation of Ram Bahadur Rai's Yathavat writings

Veer Kunwar Singh: Pratham Swatantrata Sangram ke Mahanayak – Dr Shashi Singh

Vidhan Sabha Mein Badri Vishal – Abhishek

Lok Medha Samman: Padma Puraskaron ka Swarnim Kaal
– Dr Darshani Priya

Jin Raahon Par Siyaram Chale – Captain J. P. Singh Rathore

Ganwai Gandhi – Anuranjan Jha

As an Author

From his student days, buying books, reading and preserving them has been a cherished pursuit for Harivansh. His commitment and discipline as a reader are best reflected in his personal library at his residence in Ranchi, which houses a rich and wide-ranging collection of books — covering village life and society, politics, history, philosophy, and global affairs.

During his years in journalism, he regularly wrote critical essays and reflections on newly published books. Many of these writings were later compiled and published in book form under the title Shabd Sansar. This sustained engagement with books gradually transformed journalist Harivansh into an author. Alongside his newspaper and magazine writings, he began authoring books that connected the pressing questions of his time and his personal experiences with broader social and collective concerns.

Over nearly four decades of active journalism and twelve years in parliamentary life, Harivansh has so far published and edited a total of 35 books. Of these, 19 books are written in Hindi, one in English, and the remaining 15 are edited volumes.

List of books published before entering parliamentary life (prior to 2014)

Edited volumes:

- Jharkhand – Disum Muktigatha aur Srijan ke Sapne (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Johar Jharkhand (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Jharkhand Su-shasan Ab Bhi Sambhavana Hai (2009) – Prabhat Prakashan
- Santal Hool Adivasi Pratirodh Sanskriti (2009) – Prakashan Sansthan
- Jharkhand Asmita ke Aayam (2011) – Prakashan Sansthan
- Biharnaama (2011) – Prakashan Sansthan
- Bihar Raaste ki Talash (2011) – Prakashan Sansthan
- Bihar Asmita ke Aayam (2011) – Prakashan Sansthan

Books Authored (in Hindi)

- Jharkhand Samay aur Sawal (2012) – Prabhat Prakashan
- Jharkhand Sapne aur Yatharth (2012) – Prabhat Prakashan

Edited Books on Former Prime Minister Chandrashekhar

- Chandrashekhar ke Vichar (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Chandrashekhar Samvad Ek: Uthal-Puthal aur Dhruvikaran (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Chandrashekhar Samvad Do: Rachnatmak Bechaini Mein (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Chandrashekhar Samvad Teen: Ek Doosre Shikhar Se (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Chandrashekhar ke Baare Mein (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Meri Jail Diary: Ek (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Meri Jail Diary: Do (2002) – Rajkamal Prakashan

Books Published (Authored and Edited) After Entering Parliamentary Life (2014)

Authored Book (in English)

- Chandrashekhar: The Last Icon of Ideological Politics (2019) – Rupa Publications.

The book was formally released on 24 July 2019 by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the Balayogi Auditorium, Parliament Library Building.

Books Authored (in Hindi)

- Shabd Sansar (2016) – India Telling Books
- Dil Se Maine Duniya Dekhi (2018) – Rajkamal Prakashan
- Ganesh Mantri: Aadhunik Hindi Patrakaritake Yashasvi Stambh (2022) – Rudra Publishers
- Kalash (2022) – Vani Prakashan
- Srishti ka Mukut: Kailash Mansarovar (2022) – Vani Prakashan
- Path ke Prakash Punj (2022) – Vani Prakashan
- Satyagrahi Sannyasi (Bhavani Dayal Sannyasi ki Sankshipt Jeevani) (2023) – Notional (eBook)

Ten Books Published under the 'Samay ke Sawal' Series

(Published by Prakashan Sansthan, New Delhi)

'**Samay Ke Sawaal**' (Questions of the Times) was published in 2024. Spread across 5,211 pages, these books compile Harivansh's writings from 1977 to 2017. They are a collection of articles published in ***Navbharat Times, Dharmyug, Ravivar, Prabhat Khabar***, and other media publications. Each volume focuses on a different theme. The series covers writings from different periods over the past four decades on socio-political, economic and cultural issues concerning governance and society, both in India and around the world. The content spans various genres including reports, reportage, editorials, analytical commentary, short commentaries, interviews, travelogues, reviews and more.

1. Bihar Sapna aur Sach
2. Jharkhand Sampann Dharti, Udaas Basant
3. Jharkhand Chunautiyan Bhi, Avsar Bhi
4. Rashtriya Charitra ka Aaina
5. Patan ki Hod
6. Bhavishya ka Bharat
7. Sarokar aur Samvad
8. Ateet ke Panne
9. Urja ke Uts
10. Safar ke Shesh

Books Written on Harivansh After 2014

1. Harivansh: Patrakarita ka Lokdharm – Editor: Kripashankar Chaubey (2024) – Pralek Prakashan
2. JansarokarkePatrakar Harivansh – Dr. R. K. Neerad (2020) – Prabhat Prakashan
3. Newsprint to Heartprint: An Ingenious Odyssey of Harivansh in Prabhat Khabar – Srinath Sridharan, Abhijit K. Chattoraj, Saloni Sinha (2024) – Writersgram Publications
4. Harivansh's Experiment with AD-Vocacy Journalism: From Ads to Action, From Words to Change – A. S. Raghunath (2025) – IndiaStat Publications

Profile

Birth and Early Life

30 June 1956
Born in the village of Sitab Diara (Daljeet Tola) in Ballia district (Uttar Pradesh).
This is the native village of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan. The village is spread across the borders of three districts — Bhojpur (Ara), Ballia, and Saran (Chhapra)—situated between two states and between the rivers Ganga and Ghaghara. It is divided into 27 hamlets (tolas).

Education

His education began in the village. He completed his primary schooling in Kashiray Tola. He passed his matriculation from the high school named after Jayaprakash Narayan. He completed his Intermediate studies at Uday Pratap College (UP College) in Banaras and earned his undergraduate degree and a Master's degree in Economics from Banaras Hindu University (BHU). He also received diploma-level training from the Department of Journalism at BHU.

Political Awakening

The student movement under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan began to take shape during his time at BHU. As a student, Harivansh developed a keen interest in politics. He contested for the post of General Secretary and was elected to the Student Union from the Faculty of Arts.

Then came the period of the Emergency. He became involved in underground activities such as distributing pamphlets and putting up posters. In Banaras, he began visiting the home of the socialist economist and political thinker Shri. Krishnanath. He also started frequenting the Sarva Seva Sangh and had the opportunity to closely interact with figures such as Dada Dharmadhikari. His political consciousness continued to expand through these interactions.

He shared a close relationship with Jagdish Babu, the personal secretary of Jayaprakash Narayan. During the Emergency, Jagdish Babu wrote letters of introduction to three prominent individuals and sent Harivansh to Delhi. However, despite being from JP's village and carrying Jagdish Babu's letters, two of the three individuals declined to meet him. One letter was addressed to Anupam Mishra. Anupam Ji's father, the poet Bhawani Prasad Mishra, responded with warmth and encouragement. In this manner, Harivansh continued to gain opportunities to observe and understand politics from close quarters.

During this period, he developed the habit of reading and writing political material. His dream of becoming an economist gradually took a new direction, and he became increasingly drawn toward journalism. He remained active in journalism for nearly four decades, during which he wrote and engaged in dialogue on social, political, cultural, and economic issues.

Career

Journalism

the Times of India Group. He served as a Sub-Editor at Dharmyug from 1977 to 1981. From 1985 to 1989, he worked as Assistant Editor at Ravivar, the Hindi magazine of the Anand Bazar Patrika Group. In October 1989, he joined the Ranchi-based newspaper *Prabhat Khabar* as Editor-in-Chief and continued in that position until June 2016.

Banking

From 1981 to 1984, he worked as an officer with the Bank of India in Hyderabad and Patna.

Prime Minister's Office

He served as Additional Information Adviser (Joint Secretary) to Prime Minister Shri Chandra Shekhar from 1990 until June 1991.

During His Career in Journalism

— Served as Consulting Editor of Vidura, the journal of the Indian Press Institute.

— Awarded the Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi Journalism Award in August 1996 by the All India Journalists' Development Council, Kolkata.

— Honored with the First Madhav Rao Sapre Award in August 2008 at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) for distinguished contribution and work in the field of journalism.

— Member of the Board of Directors for the K.K. Birla Foundation Journalist Research Fellowship.

— Member of the Hindi Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India (1991–1996).

— Member of the Official Language Award Selection Committee of the Government of Bihar (1992).

— Member of the Best Legislator Selection Committee of the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly (2001 and 2004).

— Member of the Hindi Advisory Committee, Ministry of Railways, Government of India (1999–2002).

— Member of the Governing Body of Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism (1998–2003).

— Nominated by the Government of India as a member of the Organising Committee for the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan.

— Organising Committee Member (Bihar) of the Asian Development Research Centre (ADRI) and former Vice President in Jharkhand.

— Active participant in the World Editors Forum of the World Association of Newspapers, France.

— Member of the Editors Guild of India, New Delhi.

— Honored in September 2012 at the Ninth World Hindi Conference in Johannesburg (South Africa) for outstanding contribution to Hindi.

— Conferred the Acharya Tulsi Samman in 2014 by the Acharya Tulsi Mahapragya Vichar Manch, Mehrauli, Delhi.

In Parliament

— Elected to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar in April 2014 as a candidate of Janata Dal (United).

— Elected Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on 9 August 2018.

— Re-elected to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar in April 2020 (Janata Dal United).

— Re-elected as Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on 9 September 2020.

Personal Information

Father: Late Shri Banke Bihari Singh
Mother: Late Smt. Devayani Devi
Wife: Smt. Asha Singh
Son: Vikas Kumar Singh
Daughter: Richa Singh
Address: Road No. 6S, Vrindavan Colony, Chiraundi Bodeya Road,
Ranchi, Jharkhand. Pin: 834006
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PHOTO GALLERY

Inauguration of New Parliament Building

At the foundation laying ceremony of the new Parliament House in December 2020

During the inauguration of the New Parliament building in May 2023 alongside Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla

Call on with Hon'ble President of India Droupadi Murmu

The position of Deputy Chairman accords various opportunities to work closely and meet with higher constitutional offices. Below are some glimpses from meetings with three Presidents and Vice Presidents during the 12years in Rajya Sabha. The Deputy Chairman works closely with Vice President, ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

With Ram Nath Kovind, Hon'ble President of India (2017-2022)

With Hon'ble Vice President and Chairman, Rajya Sabha (2017-2022) during a Parliamentary engagement

With Hon'ble President of India (2012-2017) Pranab Mukherjee

With Hon'ble Vice President and Chairman, Rajya Sabha (2022-2025) Jagdeep Dhankar ahead of a Parliament Session

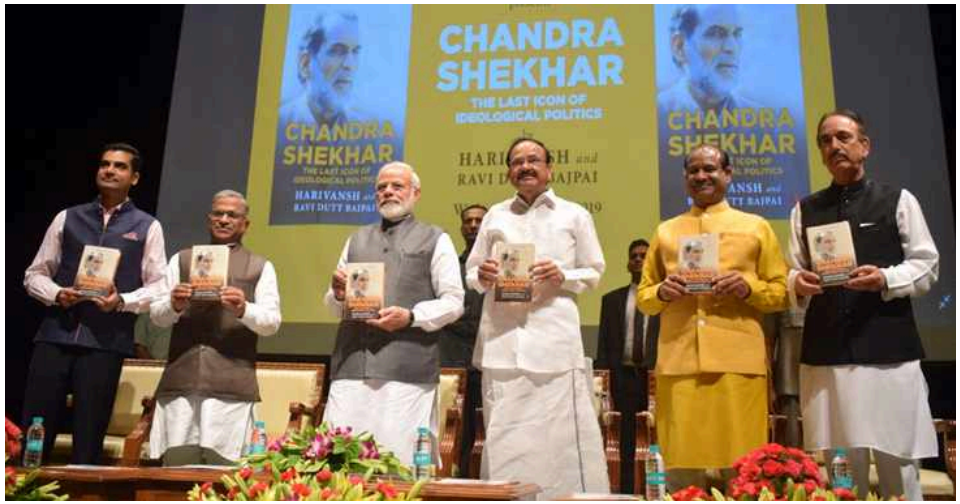
Congratulating Hon'ble Vice President elect CP Radhakrishnan in September 2025

With Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker (2014-2019) Sumitra Mahajan in Rome, during Harivansh's time as Member of Parliament

With Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla during a conference of the Inter Parliamentary Union in Geneva

With National Security Advisor Ajit Doval during a lecture commemorating Sardar Patel hosted by IC Centre for Governance in 2025

with Deputy Speaker of Russian Parliament at the P20 Speakers Summit in 2024



In 2019, Harivansh co-authored a book on former Prime Minister Chandrashekhar that was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was also a special occasion to have the Vice President, Prime Minister, Speaker Lok Sabha, and Leader of Opposition of Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad on one platform.

With renowned Gandhian writer and thinker Gautam Bajaj in Vinobha's Pawnar Ashram (Wardha, Maharashtra). He also served as secretary to Acharya Vinobha Bhave

At the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of Commonwealth Nations hosted by India in New Delhi in 2026

ANNEXURES

Details of Parliamentary Intervention (2014-2018)

Matters Raised With Permission

No.	Title	Date
1	Continued cross-border incursions from Pakistan	12.08.2014
2	Cleaning of River Yamuna	12.03.2015
3	Possibility of hacking of EVMs	12.03.2015
4	Illegal and unethical online sale of medicines	17.12.2015
5	Plight of displaced families in Jharkhand due to industrialisation	28.04.2016
6	Withdrawal of forces from Siachen	29.04.2016
7	Alleged lynching of muslims in Jharkhand	29.04.2016
8	Agreement of Nepal with China on transit rights and multiple train routes	29.04.2016
9	Need to rationalise parity between armed forces and bureaucracy	03.05.2016
10	Concern over supply of fake and adulterated fitness and food supplements in market	05.05.2016
11	Concern over top companies defaulting in bank loans	05.05.2016
12	Incidents of eve-teasing of students in Haryana	06.05.2016
13	Situation due to deteriorating health of some JNU students participating in indefinite fast	06.05.2016
14	Indian workers stranded in Mecca in Saudi Arabia	10.05.2016
15	Suspension of students by the VC of Banaras Hindu University	21.07.2016
16	Death of renowned Hockey player Mohd. Shahid	21.07.2016
17	Concern over efforts to dilute the benefits of reservation for OBCs on the grounds of creamy layer	27.07.2016
18	Alleged discrimination with the world-renowned Khuda Baksh Library by the Ministry of Culture	27.07.2016
19	Concern over threat to cyber security of the sensitive departments of the Government	27.07.2016
20	Dismal performance of Government in creating job opportunities in organized and unorganized sectors	01.08.2016
21	Plight of labourers from Bihar within the country and abroad	01.08.2016
22	Havoc caused by floods in various States of northern India and steps being taken in this regard	01.08.2016
23	Proposed shifting of the headquarters of the Tea Board from Kolkata to Guwahati	02.08.2016
24	Alleged fraud amounting to 302 crores in a branch of the Indian Overseas Bank in Chandigarh	08.08.2016
25	Death of cows in a cow shelter at Jaipur	08.08.2016
26	Re. Demand for ruling in respect of holding meetings of committees during the session of parliament along with a point of order raised by the Hon'ble Minister	09.08.2016
27	Concern over suicide by students taking coaching classes in Kota, Rajasthan	02.02.2017
28	Plight of Print Media Industry	03.02.2017
29	Problems being faced by the students due to restriction on number of attempts for AIPMT	03.02.2017
30	Plight of powerloom industry in the country	03.02.2017
31	Need for CBI inquiry into the case of a missing student of JNU	06.02.2017
32	Reported scam of Rs 3,700 crores by a social trade company	08.02.2017
33	Need to revoke the U.G.C. Notification regarding admissions for M.Phil and Ph.D. Courses	08.02.2017
34	Need to confer Bharat Ratna on Late Shri Karpoori Thakur	08.02.2017
35	Alleged attack on academic freedom in Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University	10.03.2017
36	Alleged harassment of farmers by bank managers and farmers' suicides in Tamil Nadu	16.03.2017
37	Plight of farmers due to inefficient system of procurement of wheat and pulses by the Government	16.03.2017
38	Plight of common man due to economic burden imposed by the Government	17.03.2017
39	Poor implementation of the Right to Education Act	21.03.2017

No.	Title	Date
40	Need for compensatory attempt for aggrieved candidates of Hindi and other official languages in Civil Services Examination	22.03.2017
41	Alleged conversion of black money into legal money by Shell companies	22.03.2017
42	Concern over frequent coal mine accidents in Koyalanchal in Jharkhand	22.03.2017
43	Need for a Central Legislation for protection of street hawkers	22.03.2017
44	Concern over sex determination racket caught in a village in Delhi	24.03.2017
45	Need to resume work in the fertilizer unit in Barauni	31.03.2017
46	Increasing fire incidents in ordnance factories in the country	31.03.2017
47	Safety and security of whistleblowers and their families particularly women and children	31.03.2017
48	Lapse in security arrangements of the President of India	06.04.2017
49	Waiver of loans to farmers in the country	07.04.2017
50	Need to make NCERT study material mandatory to all CBSE schools	12.04.2017
51	Cases of fraud by fake doctors and middlemen in Government hospitals in Delhi	12.04.2017
52	Need to get Presidential assent to the NEET Bill, passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly	19.07.2017
53	Agitation due to closure of the Jharkhand's Dhanbad-Chandrapura railway line	20.07.2017
54	Concern over GST imposed on materials used by disabled and marginalised persons	20.07.2017
55	Concern over the scarcity of life saving drugs in hospitals after implementation of GST	24.07.2017
56	Loss of lives due to illegal mining in Jharkhand	04.08.2017
57	Need for installation of a statue of Rabindranath Tagore at Jalianwala Bagh Memorial premises	04.08.2017
58	Need to save the village and memorial of Shri Jai Prakash Narayan	19.12.2017
59	Incidents of misbehaviour with the passengers by some private airlines	29.12.2017
60	Need to provide central aid for flood affected people of Bihar and to expedite construction of high dams on Saptkoshi and Sunkoshi rivers	02.01.2018
61	Concern over quality of education in the country	07.02.2018
62	Challenges arising out of the misuse of social media	19.07.2018
63	Crisis in the Banking Sector of the country	24.07.2018
64	Threat to India's national security on account of Chinese MNCs	25.07.2018
65	Adverse impact of Indigo plantation on soil fertility	26.07.2018
66	Concern over increasing menace of elephants in Surguja district of Chhattisgarh	26.07.2018
67	Poor quality of food served in the Ranchi Rajdhani Express	02.08.2018
68	Lack of quality healthcare facilities for poor women and children in Balia district of Uttar Pradesh	02.08.2018
69	Need for recognition and grant of Central Pension to the victims of internal emergency of 1975	02.08.2018

Short Duration Discussion

No.	Title	Date
1	Re: Situation arising from reported attempts to curb independence of Media and restrict freedom of expression	08.08.2014
2	Situation arising out of price rise in the country	27.07.2016
3	Excessively high levels of air pollution in Delhi	28.12.2017
4	The state of economy, investment climate and job creation in the country and the need to address the challenge of rising unemployment	04.01.2018

Special Mention

No.	Title	Date
1	Need to bring reforms in school and higher education to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor	07.05.2015
2	Need to set up an inquiry into the revelations made in a magazine on the involvement of middlemen to give information about judicial verdicts to corporates and other beneficiaries	27.07.2016
3	Demand to make a time-bound plan to provide ambulances, equipped with all the facilities and give cashless treatment to victims of road accidents on National Highways in the country	24.07.2017
4	Concern over assurance made for various development works in Jharkhand not being fulfilled by Central Government	26.07.2017
5	Demand to address the issues of delay in arrival and departure by some Superfast Trains of South Central Railway and North Central Railway	10.08.2017
6	Demand to remove anomalies existing in various pension schemes launched in country	06.02.2018

Budget

No.	Title	Date
1	The Budget (General), 2014-15 and the appropriation (No.2) bill, 2014 the appropriation (No.3) Bill, 2014 - Contd.	24.7.2014
2	The Budget (General) 2015-16 -Contd.	18.03.2015
3	The Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 2016 and The Appropriation Bill, 2016	16.03.2016
4	The Union Budget, 2017-18	16.03.2017
5.	The Union Budget, 2018-19	08.02.2018

Government Legislation

No.	Title	Date
1	The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2014	09.12.2014
2	(i) The Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 2015 (ii) The Appropriation Bill, 2015	18.03.2015
3	The Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Bill, 2014	28.04.2015
4	The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2014	16.03.2016
5	The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2016	28.07.2016
6	The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Bill, 2016	02.08.2016
7	(i) The Appropriation Bill, 2017; and (ii) The Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 2017	23.03.2017
8	The Finance Bill, 2017 - Contd.	29.03.2017
9	I. The Appropriation (Railways) Bill, 2017 II. The Appropriation (Railways) No.2 Bill, 2017 AND Discussion on Working of the Ministry of Railways	30.03.2017
10	The Collection of Statistics (Amendment) Bill, 2017	26.07.2017
11	The National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2017 - Contd.	26.07.2017
12	The Enforcement of Security Interest and Recovery of Debts Laws and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Bill, 2016	09.08.2017
13	The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2017	10.08.2017
14	The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2017 - Contd.	19.12.2017
15	The Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2017	27.12.2017
16	The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2017	28.12.2017
17	Statutory Resolution Disapproving the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017	02.01.2018
18	The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017	02.01.2018
19	The State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill, 2017	18.07.2018
20	The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017	23.07.2018
21	The Specific Relief (Amendment) Bill, 2018	23.07.2018
22	The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 - Contd.	25.07.2018

Private Member Legislation

No.	Title	Date
1	The Parliament (Enhancement of Productivity) Bill, 2017	03.08.2015
2	The Rights of Transgender Persons Bill, 2014	27.12.2015

Other Discussion

No.	Title	Date
1	Discussion on Working of the Ministry of Railways	30.03.2017
2	Re. Objection to discussion on bills after private members' business on fridays	31.03.2017
3	Regarding direction to set up special courts for MPs and MLAs	19.12.2017
4	Regarding Chairman's advice on the manner of addressing the Chairman and Vice-President	06.02.2018
5	Regarding demand for completion of debate on NRC in Assam	01.08.2018

Details of Foreign Parliamentary Delegations & VisitsDetails of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation Visits Abroad

Sl. No.	Dates	Conference/Meeting	Status
1	12-16 Oct 2014	131st IPU Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland	Member
2	September 2017	72nd UNGA, New York, USA	Member
3	14-18 Oct 2018	139th IPU Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland	Member/Leader
4	16-20 Mar 2019	Goodwill Delegation to Japan	Leader
5	5-10 Apr 2019	140th IPU Assembly, Doha, Qatar	Leader
6	1-2 Sep 2019	South Asian Speakers' Summit (SDGs), Maldives	Member
7	23-24 Sep 2019	Speakers of Eurasian Countries Parliaments, Kazakhstan	Leader
8	6-10 Jan 2020	25th CSPOC, Ottawa, Canada	Member
9	7-9 Sep 2021	World Conference of Speakers, Vienna, Austria	Member
10	7-8 Oct 2021	G20 Speakers' Summit (P-20), Rome, Italy	Member
11	6-7 Oct 2022	G20 Speakers' Summit (P-20), Jakarta, Indonesia	Member
12	11-15 Oct 2022	145th IPU Assembly, Kigali, Rwanda	Leader
13	3-6 Jan 2023	CSPOC, Canberra, Australia	Leader
14	27-29 Sep 2023	BRICS Parliamentary Forum, South Africa	Leader
15	12-14 Oct 2023	G20 Speakers' Summit (P-20), New Delhi	Member
16	3-6 Jan 2024	27th CSPOC, Kampala, Uganda	Leader
17	6-9 Mar 2024	Visit to Hungary	Leader
18	23-27 Mar 2024	148th IPU Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland	Leader
19	11-12 Jul 2024	10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum, Russia	Member
20	13-17 Oct 2024	149th IPU Assembly, Geneva, Switzerland	Member
21	6-8 Nov 2024	G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit, Brazil	Leader
22	5-9 Apr 2025	150th IPU Assembly, Tashkent, Uzbekistan	Member
23	18 May 2025	Official Delegation to Vatican City (Pontificate Ceremony)	Leader
24	4-5 Jun 2025	11th BRICS Parliamentary Forum, Brazil	Member
25	29 Sep-3 Oct 2025	G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit, South Africa	Leader
26	5-12 Oct 2025	Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, Barbados	Member
27	14-16 Jan 2026	28th CSPOC, New Delhi	Member

Foreign Parliamentary Delegations that called on the Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, New Delhi

Sl. No.	Date	Country	Delegation Details
1	25 September 2018	France	Four-member delegation led by Mr. Yvon Collin, President of the India-France Friendship Group of the French Senate at Parliament House
2	6 February 2019	Russian Federation	Three-member delegation led by Mrs. Yelena Afanasyeva, Committee on Constitutional Legislation and State Building at Parliament House Annexe
3	5 July 2019	Republic of Korea	Delegation led by Mr. Song Young Gill, President of the Korea-India Parliamentarians' Association
4	23 July 2019	China	10-member delegation led by Mr. Qie Yingcai, Member of the 13th National People's Congress
5	12 March 2022	Czech Republic	Delegation led by H.E. Mr. Jiri Oberfalzer, Vice President of the Senate
6	6 February 2023	Hungary	Six-member delegation led by H.E. Mr. Istvan Jakab, Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly
7	29 March 2023	Russia	10-member delegation led by H.E. Alexander Babakov, Deputy Chairman, State Duma
8	19 December 2023	EU Delegation	12-member delegation led by Mr. Morten Løkke-gaard, MEP, Chair of D-IN Delegation
9	8 January 2024	Hungary	Delegation led by H.E. Mr. Zsolt Attila Nemet, President of Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs
10	6 February 2025	Sweden	12-member delegation led by H.E. Margareta Cederfelt, MP, Chairperson of India-Sweden Friendship Group
11	11 February 2025	Poland	H.E. Mr. Pawel Kowal, MP and Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee
12	17 March 2025	Portugal	Delegation led by H.E. Mr. Marcos Perestrello, Vice-President of Portuguese Assembly
13	18 March 2025	European Parliament	Delegation led by H.E. Ms. Angelika Niebler, Chair of EP Delegation for relations with India
14	4 August 2025	United Kingdom	Delegation led by Ms. Nusrat Munir Ul-Ghani, Deputy Speaker, House of Commons
15	29 October 2025	European Parliament Committee of International Trade	Delegation led by Ms. Cristina Maestre, INTA Standing Rapporteur for India
16	12 December 2025	Czech Republic	Delegation led by Ms. Jitka Seitlova, Vice-President of the Senate

contd...

Sl. No.	Date	Country	Delegation Details
17.	30 Januay 2026	Republic of Korea	Delegation led by Mr. Lee Hack Young, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly of Republic of Korea
18.	18 Febrauary 2026	Hungary	Delegation led by Mr. Lajos Olah, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly of Hungary
19.	02 April 2026	Russian Federation	Delegation led by H.E. Mr. Vladimir Yakusher, the First Deputy Speaker of Federation Council of the Russian Federation

Articles in Newspapers

Harivansh has authored various articles in leading English and Hindi newspapers. These articles cover his opinions on contemporary subjects of parliamentary functioning, governance, and society.

Articles in English

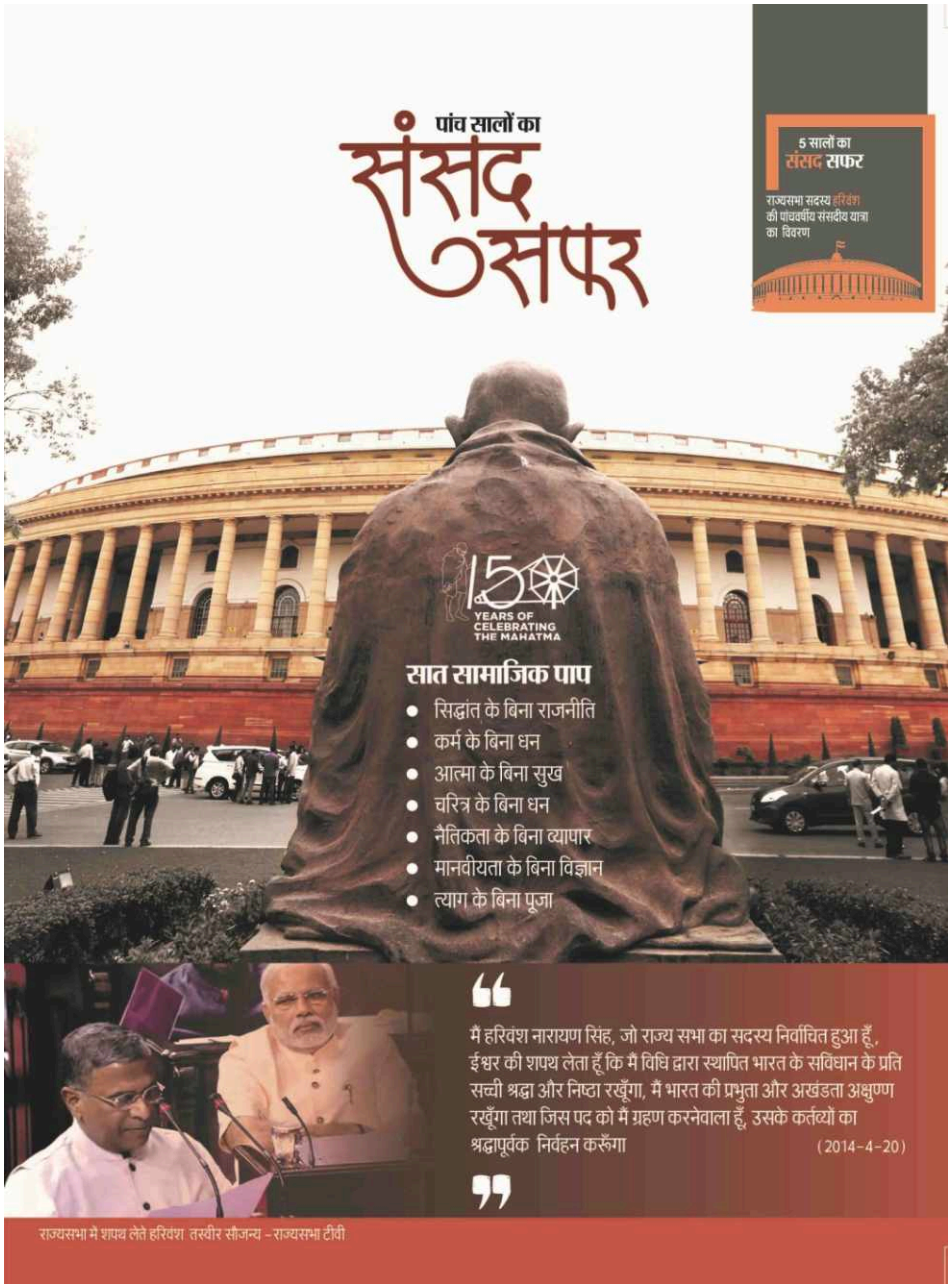
No.	Date	Title	Publication
1	25/06/2019	Emergency chronicles: The party Chandra Shekhar brought to power, sent him to jail	Indian Express
2	20/04/2020	India has played an exemplary role in tackling the Covid-19 crisis	Indian Express
3	11/03/2023	Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya a Befitting Reply to Critics, Gives Equal Play to All PMs	Economic Times
4	14/04/2023	Engaging young people in India's political history	Hindustan Times
5	27/05/2023	A fountainhead of the people's hopes and aspirations	The Hindu
6	13/10/2023	P20: A parliamentary dimension to global governance	Indian Express
7	11/04/2024	Cues from India's past to help battle climate crisis	Hindustan Times
8	13/04/2024	Swaminarayan Temple: the UAE's monument of harmony	The Pioneer
9	08/07/2024	Parliamentary Disruption: Need for Course Correction	The Daily Guardian
10	10/07/2024	A mockery of Parliament?	Indian Express
11	19/10/2024	ONOP: Sync 'n' Scale Up the States	Economic Times
12	18/12/2025	In Bihar, MPLADS have paved way for knowledge hubs	Indian Express

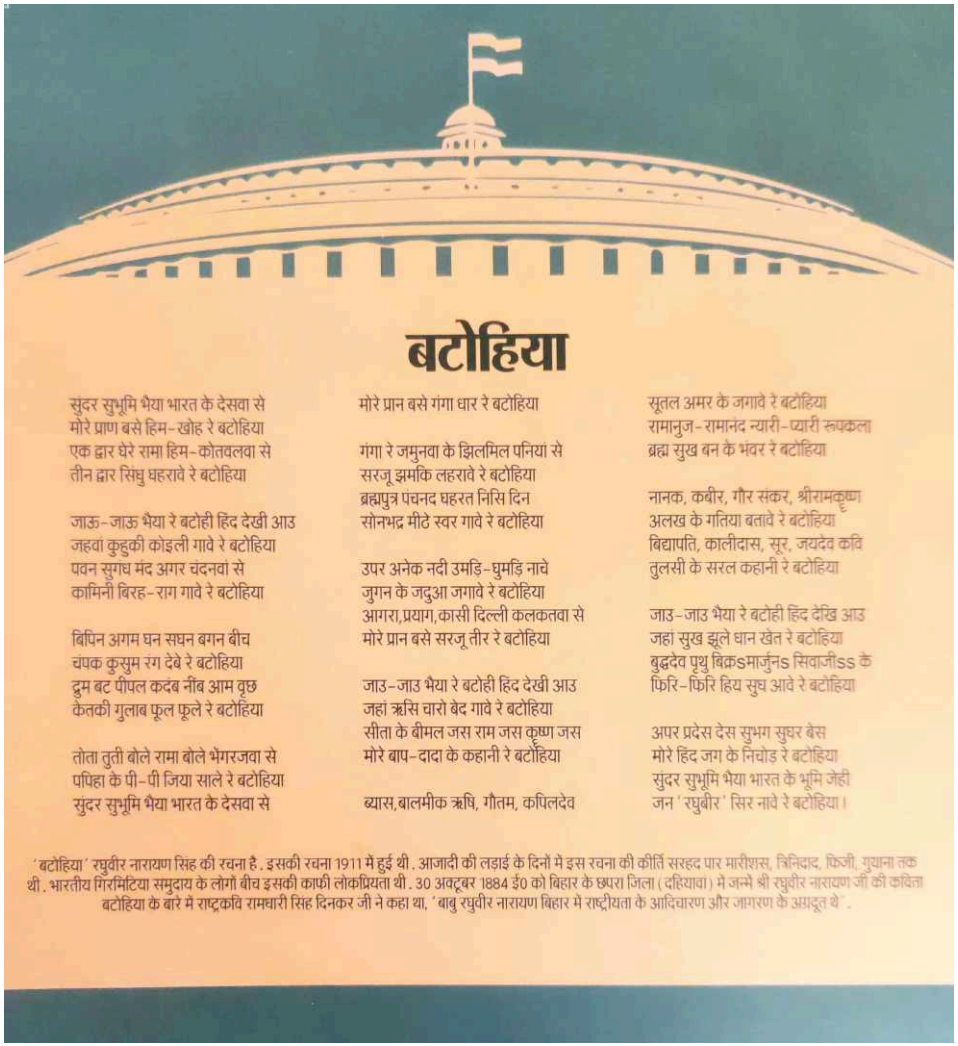
Below are some references to prominent articles in Hindi. He authored a column in Dainik Bhaskar regularly since 2020 alongside other leading Hindi dailies.

सं.	दिनांक	शीर्षक
1.	02.07.17	आधी रात का फैसला
2.	12.07.17	गांधी, लोहिया और जेपी के सिद्धांतों का मिश्रण हैं नीतीश के पास
3.	13.07.17	आलू और बालू वाले बिहार को मिला न्याय के साथ विकास
4.	14.07.17	सरकारें समाज सुधार की काम नहीं करतीं, पर नीतीश ने किया
5.	29.04.19	भूले राजनीतिक आदर्शों के नायक हैं कड़िया मुंडा !
6.	21.07.20	सिर्फ सुधार ही बचाएंगे !
7.	22.07.20	खारिज मॉडल का खामियाजा
8.	23.07.20	दबंगों का दबदबा
9.	24.07.20	चार दशक पहले ये सुधार होते तो कोयला कथा अलग होती
10.	25.07.20	तेज विकास के लिए देश को बड़ी पूंजी की जरूरत
11.	26.07.20	नीतियां फेल नहीं हुई, नीयत से संकट बढ़ा !
12.	27.07.20	जब एकबारगी हिल गईं बैंकिंग उद्योग की जड़ें
13.	28.07.20	दुनिया देखेगी आत्मनिर्भर भारत की ताकत
14.	24.07.20	अतीत बताता है कि भारत ने संकट से सबक नहीं लिया
15.	07.08.20	क्या लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था में विकास धीमी गति से होता है? संसदीय कामकाज की प्रक्रिया में इस यक्ष प्रश्न का उत्तर
16.	21.08.20	अब अमेरिका-ताइवान रिश्तों का नया चक्र शुरू हो रहा है, भारत-ताइवान संबंधों में भी सुधार के संकेत हैं, क्या यह इतिहास के दूसरे अध्याय का आरंभिक चरण है?
17.	04.09.20	टेक्नालॉजी के हाथों इंसान का भाग्य होगा या दीर्घजीवी मानव के नियंत्रण में होगी 'सुपर टेक्नोलॉजी'?, इस फैसले की दहलीज पर खड़ी है ग्लोबल दुनिया
18.	18.09.20	विकास पर समझौता, भावी पीढ़ी और देश के साथ अन्याय है; सरकारें आएं या जाएं पर बेहतर भविष्य से राजनीति नहीं होनी चाहिए
19.	16.10.20	चुनाव की वजह से बिहार फिर केंद्र में है, इतिहास के गर्भ में दबा तथ्य है कि 'आधुनिक बिहार' बना कैसे? जवाब एक किताब में मिला
20.	30.10.20	युवाओं का सब्र घट रहा है, अब जीवन को सरल बनाना जरूरी है

21.	08.11.20	नीतीश जी, आपकी अधिक जरूरत है ! (केवल बिहार एडीशन)
22.	13.11.20	जीवन जीने के लिए हमें मौत को जानना भी बहुत जरूरी है
23.	27.11.20	नए होनहार युवा, राजनीति या व्यवस्था को बारीकी से परख रहे हैं, यह स्वागत योग्य है, चूंकि उनका भविष्य, इससे जुड़ा है
24.	11.12.20	युवा सार्वजनिक योजनाओं पर निगाह रखें, चुनौती का समाधान टेक्नोलॉजी से निकालने के लिए तत्पर रहें
25.	22.01.21	बदलाव का दशक: तकनीक कादुनिया के तानेबाने पर होगा असर
26.	05.02.21	आत्मनिर्भर भारत ही देश में सबको रोजगार दे सकता है
27.	19.02.21	उदारीकरण की अपनी शंकाएं हैं ये संसार की नई बेचैनी बन रही
28.	06.03.21	आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए निजी स्तर पर आत्मसंयम की जरूरत
29.	19.03.21	कोयला उद्योग बंद होने की भविष्य की चुनौती का हल अभी खोजें
30.	02.04.21	जो अतीत को अनदेखा करते हैं, वे भविष्य की खाई खोदते हैं
31.	16.04.21	इस मुश्किल समय में क्या हम अपना नागरिक फर्ज निभा रहे हैं?
32.	01.05.21	संकट क्र.में सिर्फ सामाजिक रिश्ते ही हमारी जान बचा सकते हैं
33.	15.05.21	भारतीय परंपरा में मृत्यु जीवन से जुड़ी है, इसकी चर्चा से भय जागता है, पर यह दौर भी गुजर जाएगा
34.	28.05.21	आत्मसंयम की बुनियाद पर सामाजिक चरित्र का विकास
35.	25.06.21	क्या 'डिजाइनर बेबी' बनाना नैतिक रूप से सही होगा
36.	09.07.21	इस आपदा के बाद भावी संसार के लिए नई नींव रखनी होगी
37.	17.09.21	एआई दुनिया को बहुत तेजी से बदल रही है
38.	01.10.21	जेपी के नजरिए से दुनिया को सही विकास देखने की जरूरत है
39.	15.10.21	भारत के अध्यात्म से प्रभावित इटली ने कोविड को ऐसे जीता
40.	29.10.21	अब युवा ही भारत का भविष्य हैं, उन्हें कौशल संपन्न बनाएं
41.	12.11.21	मंदिर नैतिक मूल्यों के केंद्र हैं इनका बेहतर प्रबंधन जरूरी
42.	26.11.21	देश में कुलपति चयन के मापदंड बदलने चाहिए
43.	06.01.22	क्या 2022 में हम खुद को बदलने के लिए तैयार हैं ?
44.	21.01.22	हमारा समाज अभी भी सच्चे नायकों का सम्मान करता है
45.	04.02.22	टेक कंपनियों के विजन पर उठ रहे सवाल, राह निकालनी होगी
46.	18.02.22	वैश्विक महामारी के बावजूद हमारा अर्थ-प्रबंधन श्रेष्ठ रहा
47.	16.03.22	इतिहास युद्ध के सबकों से भरा है, पर हमने सीखा नहीं है
48.	12.04.22	महामारी से जूझकर हमने स्वाभिमान की गाथा लिखी
49.	23.04.22	क्या हर जगह कानून ही काम करेगा, समाज नहीं ?
50.	13.05.22	बराबरी एक सपना है या साकार होने वाला सच ?
51.	24.06.22	पुरानी पेंशन नीति की ओर लौटना अब संभव नहीं है
52.	08.07.22	देश के 20 राज्य कर्ज के बोझ तले कैसे दब गए ?
53.	22.07.22	कर्ज में दबे राज्य बेलगाम खर्च से बाज नहीं आ रहे
54.	09.08.22	हाल की कुछ खबरें समाज की सेहत बताने के साथ गंभीर सवाल भी पूछती हैं
55.	19.08.22	आजाद मुल्क में शिक्षा का उद्देश्य इंसान को गढ़ना है
56.	17.01.23	क्या 'एआई' इंसान की निजी पहचान पर हावी हो जाएगी ?
57.	07.02.23	झूठे मुकदमों और आधारहीन आरोपों की परिपाटी नई नहीं
58.	06.04.23	किस कीमत पर दुनिया को मिली है विचारों की ताकत?
59.	21.04.23	पेंशन पर तीन-चौथाई खर्च तो शेष के लिए क्या बचा ?
60.	09.05.23	देश में समय के साथ जाति कमजोर हो रही हैं या मजबूत ?
61.	24.05.23	आज नैतिक होना लग्जरी नहीं अस्तित्व से जुड़ा प्रश्न है
62.	07.06.23	दुनिया के बड़े सवाल भारत की राजनीति मे कहां हैं?
63.	22.06.23	सरकार और कंपनियों पर बचपन बचाने की जिम्मेदारी
64.	25.07.23	ज्ञान की दुनिया में सबके पास आगे बढ़ने के मौके हैं
65.	11.10.23	देश को चाहिए नई ऊर्जा व मौलिक सोच वाली राजनीति
66.	27.10.23	भारत की सफलताओं से दुनिया के सुर भी बदले
67.	24.11.23	हमारे नेता व एआई के प्रभावों को समझ पा रहे हैं ?
68.	05.01.24	क्या कानून के भय से ही हम नागरिक-फर्ज अदा करेंगे ?
69.	06.02.24	देश के कर्णधारों का साफ-सुथरी छवि का होना जरूरी
70.	06.11.24	24 साल का युवा झारखंड अपना रहनुमा चुनने को तैयार
71.	07.11.24	यहां 150 कोल माइंस, पर बिजली खरीदनी पड़ती है
72.	09.11.24	बेंगलुरू, पुणे, रांची एक साथ चले... पर रांची पिछड़ गई

73.	10.11.24	यहां प्रचुर मानव संपदा, बशर्ते माहौल-अवसर मिले
74.	11.11.24	विचार या वाद नहीं, तकनीक तय कर रही भविष्य
75.	12.11.24	दूसरे राज्य संस्थानों को बुला रहे, हम जमीन में उलझे
76.	13.11.24	भावी चुनौतियों पर हर विधायक का रिपोर्ट कार्ड बने
77.	14.11.24	मुफ्तखोरी माने... बंधक भविष्य, देश देख चुका है
78.	15.11.24	झारखंड को विकसित बनाना है तो नए अवसर तलाशने ही होंगे
79.	16.11.24	टेक्नोलाजी नए अवसर सृजित कर रही, क्या झारखंड तैयार है?
80.	17.11.24	तेजी से बढ़ना है तो नई रणनीचि और निरंतरता रखनी ही होगी
81.	18.11.24	विजनरी युवा राजनीति से जुड़ें... झारखंड आगे बढ़ेगा
82.	01.05.25	मुल्क मजबूत रहेगा, तभी न्यायपालिका है, संसद है...
83.	22.05.25	जीवन के अज्ञात तथ्यों के राज कौन जान-समझ सका है?
84.	11.06.25	हालात पहले से बेहतर पर हमें अभी और आगे बढ़ना है
85.	25.06.25	आपातकालः चंद्रशेखर की जेल डायरी
86.	09.07.25	गरीबी समाजवाद नहीं है, आर्थिक संपन्नता जरूरी
87.	26.09.25	आठ बार राष्ट्रपति शासन से गुजरकर 18वीं बार चुनाव के दौर में बिहार'
88.	27.09.25	भारत को समझने के लिए बिहार को समझना जरूरी
89.	28.09.25	भारत सोने की चिड़िया था, यह इतिहास भी हमारे नाम'
90.	29.09.25	ठोस नीतियां ही बनाती हैं भविष्य की बुलंद इमारत'
91.	30.09.25	आध्यात्मिक सर्किट जैसी परियोजनाएं बिहार की झोली भरेंगी'
92.	01.10.25	औद्योगीकरण के सर्वथा अनुकूल था बिहार का 'इकोसिस्टम'
93.	04.10.25	19वीं सदी में छिनी आर्थिक हैसियत और गरीब होता गया बिहार
94.	05.10.25	अंग्रेजी राज में नहीं, आजाद भारत में आंतरिक उपनिवेश बना बिहार
95.	06.10.25	भाड़ा समानीकरण नीति सबसे बड़ा झांसा
96.	07.10.25	'बिहार गरीब नहीं था, इसे गरीब बनाया गया'
97.	08.10.25	बिहार की अर्थव्यवस्था... दो दशक में बारह गुना छलांग
98.	09.10.25	बिहार की आर्थिक सेहत मापनी है तो जीएसडीपी को जानना जरूरी
99.	10.10.25	दूरदर्शी नेता को समाजहित में लेने पड़ते हैं कड़े फैसले
100.	11.10.25	राजनीति समाज से कट जाए तो लेन-देन का सौदा बन जाती है
101.	12.10.25	बीमारू राज्यों की परिभाषा में B बिहार के लिए था
102.	13.10.25	खैरात नहीं, महिला केंद्रित नीतियों से आया बदलाव
103.	14.10.25	लोक सेवाओं की गारंटी का कानून... बिहार ने राह दिखाई
104.	15.10.25	उदारीकरण के पहले दशक का लाभ उठाने में चूक गया बिहार
105.	16.10.25	सभाओं में भारी भीड़ के बावजूद चुनाव में समाजवाजी पिछड़े
106.	17.10.25	चुना तो हमने ही है, नेताओं को कोसने से क्या होगा'
107.	18.10.25	बिहार की पहली गैर-कांग्रेसी सरकार नौ महीने टिकी
108.	19.10.25	राजनीति के जायंट किलर महामाया प्रसाद
109.	20.10.25	विरोधी दलों ने कम, खुद कांग्रेसियों ने एक-दूसरे को हराया
110.	22.10.25	90 का दशक... गांधी की प्रयोग भूमि-चंपारण बना चंबल'
111.	23.10.25	बीमारू बिहार में पशुपालन घोटाले की शुरुआत
112.	24.10.25	1985-90 के बीच कांग्रेस सरकार ऐसे चली कि चली ही गई
113.	25.10.25	सवाल गायब हुआ, ,स्टीमर बदल गया तो मचा बवाल
114.	26.10.25	सत्ता बदली, आशा जगी पर विकास का नया माहौल नहीं बन सका
115.	27.10.25	शासन की सोच बदली तो विकास की मौन क्रांति साबित हुईं सड़कें
116.	29.10.25	14 साल में 2300 किमी से अधिक बढ़ी बिहार में एनएच की लंबाई
117.	30.10.25	दूरी घटी तो दिन फिरे, पुल बने और बदलने लगी सोच
118.	31.10.25	नदियां बांटती थीं, पुल जोड़ रहे, आधुनिकीकरण की यही असली कहानी
119.	01.11.25	सरकार कोई भी हो, शिक्षा ही मुक्ति द्वारा
120.	02.11.25	बिहार में शिक्षा श्रेष्ठ बने, इसकी जमीन तैयार
121.	09.01.26	बिहार में ज्ञान-आधारित विकास की राह
122.	10.01.26	आपदा के साये में सुरक्षा की तलाश
123.	11.01.26	बिहारः एक नई ज्ञानयात्रा की दहलीज पर
124.	12.01.26	भाषाएं बचेंगी तो संस्कृति बचेगी


पांच सालों का
संसद सफर
5 सालों का
संसद सफर
राज्यसभा सदस्य हरिवंश
की पांचवर्षीय संसदीय यात्रा
का विवरण
150
YEARS OF
CELEBRATING
THE MAHATMA
सात सामाजिक पाप
सिद्धांत के बिना राजनीति
कर्म के बिना धन
आत्मा के बिना सुख
चरित्र के बिना धन
नैतिकता के बिना व्यापार
मानवीयता के बिना विज्ञान
त्याग के बिना पूजा
मैं हरिवंश नारायण सिंह, जो राज्य सभा का सदस्य निर्वाचित हुआ हूँ,
ईश्वर की शपथ लेता हूँ कि मैं विधि द्वारा स्थापित भारत के संविधान के प्रति
सच्ची श्रद्धा और निष्ठा रखूँगा, मैं भारत की प्रभुता और अखंडता अक्षुण्ण
रखूँगा तथा जिस पद को मैं ग्रहण करनेवाला हूँ, उसके कर्तव्यों का
श्रद्धापूर्वक निर्वहन करूँगा
(2014-4-20)
राज्यसभा मे शपथ लेते हरिवंश तस्वीर सौजन्य - राज्यसभा टीवी



बटोहिया

सुंदर सुभूमि भैया भारत के देसवा से
मोरे प्राण बसे हिम-खोह रे बटोहिया
एक द्वार घेरे रामा हिम-कोतवलवा से
तीन द्वार सिंधु घहरावे रे बटोहिया

जाऊ-जाऊ भैया रे बटोही हिंद देखी आउ
जहवां कुहुकी कोइली गावे रे बटोहिया
पवन सुगंध मंद अगर चंदनवां से
कामिनी बिरह-राग गावे रे बटोहिया

बिपिन अगम घन सघन बगन बीच
चंपक कुसुम रंग देबे रे बटोहिया
द्रुम बट पीपल कदंब नींब आम वृछ
कैतकी गुलाब फूल फूले रे बटोहिया

तोता तुती बोले रामा बोले भेंगरजवा से
पपिहा के पी-पी जिया साले रे बटोहिया
सुंदर सुभूमि भैया भारत के देसवा से
मोरे प्रान बसे गंगा धार रे बटोहिया

गंगा रे जमुनवा के झिलमिल पनिया से
सरजू झमकि लहरावे रे बटोहिया
ब्रह्मपुत्र पंचनद घहरत निसि दिन
सोनभद्र मीठे स्वर गावे रे बटोहिया

उपर अनेक नदी उमड़ि-घुमड़ि नाचे
जुगन के जदुआ जगावे रे बटोहिया
आगरा,प्रयाग,कासी दिल्ली कलकतवा से
मोरे प्रान बसे सरजू तीर रे बटोहिया

जाउ-जाउ भैया रे बटोही हिंद देखी आउ
जहां ऋसि चारो बेद गावे रे बटोहिया
सीता के बीमल जस राम जस कृष्ण जस
मोरे बाप-दादा के कहानी रे बटोहिया

ब्यास,बालमीक ऋषि, गौतम, कपिलदेव
सूतल अमर के जगावे रे बटोहिया
रामानुज-रामानंद न्यारी-प्यारी रूपकला
ब्रह्म सुख बन के भंवर रे बटोहिया

नानक, कबीर, गौर संकर, श्रीरामकृष्ण
अलख के गतिया बतावे रे बटोहिया
बिद्यापति, कालीदास, सूर, जयदेव कवि
तुलसी के सरल कहानी रे बटोहिया

जाउ-जाउ भैया रे बटोही हिंद देखि आउ
जहां सुख झूले धान खेत रे बटोहिया
बुद्धदेव पृथु बिक्रsमार्जुनs सिवाजीss के
फिरि-फिरि हिय सुध आवे रे बटोहिया

अपर प्रदेस देस सुभग सुघर बेस
मोरे हिंद जग के निचोड़ रे बटोहिया
सुंदर सुभूमि भैया भारत के भूमि जेही
जन 'रघुबीर' सिर नावे रे बटोहिया।

'बटोहिया' रघुवीर नारायण सिंह की रचना है. इसकी रचना 1911 में हुई थी. आजादी की लड़ाई के दिनों में इस रचना की कीर्ति सरहद पार मारीशस, त्रिनिदाद, फिजी, गुयाना तक थी. भारतीय गिरमिटिया समुदाय के लोगों बीच इसकी काफी लोकप्रियता थी. 30 अक्टूबर 1884 ई० को बिहार के छपरा जिला (दहियावां) में जन्मे श्री रघुवीर नारायण जी की कविता बटोहिया के बारे में राष्ट्रकवि रामधारी सिंह दिनकर जी ने कहा था, 'बाबु रघुवीर नारायण बिहार में राष्ट्रीयता के आदिचारण और जागरण के अग्रदूत थे'.

2020 edition of Sansad Safar can be accessed here. This was published after completion of first term of Harivansh in Rajya Sabha in 2020

National Song

Vande Mataram!
Sujalam suphalam malayaja-sitalam,
Sasya-syamalam Mataram!
Vande Mataram!

Subhra-jyotsnam pulakita-yaminim,
Phulla-kusumita druma-dala-sobhinim,
Suhasinim sumadhura bhasinim,
Sukhadam varadam Mataram!
Vande Mataram!

Koti-koti kantha kalakala ninada karale,
Koti-koti bhujair dhrta kharakaravale,
Ke bole Ma tumi abale!
Bahubaladharinim namami tarinim,
Ripudala-varinim Mataram!
Vande Mataram!

Tumi vidya, tumi dharma,
Tumi hrdi, tumi marma,
Tvam hi pranah sarire!
Bahute tumi Ma sakti,
Hrdaye tumi Ma bhakti,
Tomarai pratima gadi mandire-mandire.
Vande Mataram!

Tvam hi Durga dasa-praharana-dharini,
Kamala kamala-dala-viharini,
Vani vidya-dayini,
Namami tvam namami kamalam,
Amalam atulam,
Sujalam suphalam Mataram!
Vande Mataram!

Syamalam saralam susmitam bhusitam,
Dharanim bharanim Mataram!
Vande Mataram!

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